METAL GEAR SOLID 4 SUPER GUIDE: 8 PAGES OF DETAILS!

GAMEPRO®

"SPARTANS ATTAAAACK!"

THE NEXT HALO

10-PAGE WORLD EXCLUSIVE: HALO WARS, HALO CHRONICLES & MORE!

FREE HALO XBOX 360! P.53

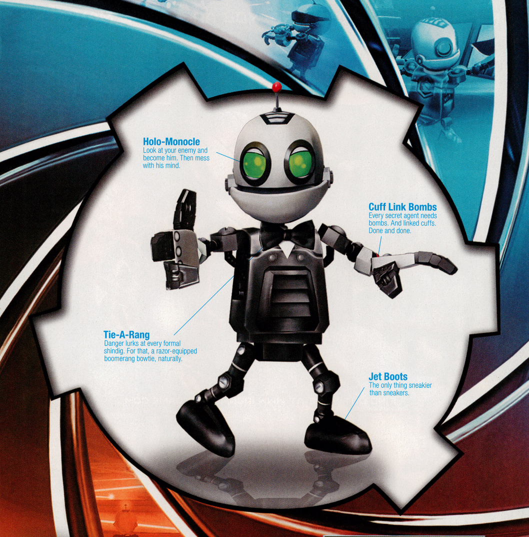
www.GamePro.com

Issue 238 / JUL 08

An IDG Entertainment Publication

THIS TIME
THE SECRET AGENT
IS THE GADGET.
SONY
PSP

Secret Agent Clank is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Developed by High Impact Games. ©2008 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. "PlayStation," "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.


Holo-Monocle
Look at your enemy and become him. Then mess with his mind.
Cuff Link Bombs
Every secret agent needs bombs. And linked cuffs. Done and done.
Tie-A-Rang
Danger lurks at every formal shindig. For that, a razor-equipped boomerang bowtie, naturally.
Jet Boots
The only thing sneakier than sneakers.

When the most difficult, secret and dangerous missions in the galaxy need to be solved, there's only one robot to turn to: Secret Agent Clank. Ratchet has been wrongfully jailed and it's up to you to free him and clear his name. Embark on a top-secret intergalactic rescue mission, using state-of-the-art gadgets to overcome challenges in stealth, puzzle-solving and hand-to-hand combat. You'll need to use everything you've got. Literally.

SECRET AGENT CLANK™

EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Blood
Crude Humor
Fantasy Violence
Mild Suggestive Themes
Tobacco Reference

ONLY ON PSP
PlayStation Portable

IN AIR OR ON THE GROUND. YOU ARE A ONE MAN ARMY.
IRON MAN™
FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.IRONMANTHEGAME.COM
MAY 2, 2008
PC DVD-ROM SOFTWARE
XBOX 360
Wii
NINTENDO DS
TEEN
Alcohol Reference
Mild Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org
MARVEL
SEGA

AVAILABLE ON PLAYSTATION®3 AND PLAYSTATION®2 COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS AND PSP® (PLAYSTATION®PORTABLE) SYSTEM.

© SEGA. All rights reserved. SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA and the SEGA logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA Corporation. Iron Man, the Movie © 2008 MVL Film Finance LLC. Marvel, Iron Man, all character names and their distinctive likenesses: ™ & © 2008 Marvel Entertainment, Inc. and its subsidiaries. All Rights Reserved. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. PSP® system – Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). Microsoft , Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

FIND YOUR INNER HERO AND UNLEASH INCREDIBLE FURY.
DEMOLISH ANYTHING IN THE OPEN WORLD AND USE IT AS A WEAPON.
UNLEASH THE HULK'S RAGE TO UNLOCK POWERFUL MOVES.
THE INCREDIBLE HULK™
WWW.INCREDIBLEHULKTHEGAME.COM
JUNE 2008
PC DVD-ROM SOFTWARE
XBOX 360 LIVE
Wii
NINTENDO DS
TEEN
Mild Blood
Mild Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING
www.esrb.org
AMAZE ENTERTAINMENT
EDGE OF REALITY
MARVEL
SEGA

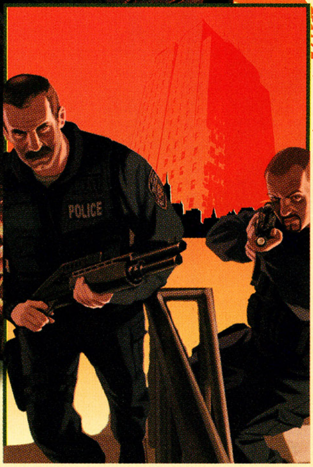
AVAILABLE ON PLAYSTATION®3 AND PLAYSTATION®2 COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS.

© SEGA. All rights reserved. SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA and the SEGA logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA Corporation. The Incredible Hulk, the Movie © 2008 MVL Film Finance LLC. Marvel, The Incredible Hulk, all character names and their distinctive likenesses: TM & © 2008 Marvel Entertainment, Inc. and its subsidiaries. All Rights Reserved. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are under license from Microsoft. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

★ Features

44 Halo Wars

GamePro gets unprecedented access to Halo Wars with this 10-page special report. Plus: Juicy gossip on the future of the Halo franchise. Prequel, anyone?



54 The17 Biggest Surprises in Metal Gear Solid 4

Is your Snake less-than-Solid? Then check out this list of our favorite features in MGS4, with helpful gameplay hints to help you master the biggest, best PS3 game of all time.

58 TheUltimate Wii Accessory Guide

From the Zapper to the Balance Board to the many third-party concoctions, there's no shortage of items to attach to your Wii Remote. GamePro goes accessory crazy to pick the winners.

64 Grand Theft Auto IV's Guide to Sin

From picking up prostitutes to outrunning the police, *GamePro* tells you everything you need to know to become a hardcore virtual criminal.

JULY 2008
ISSUE #238
GAMEPRO.COM

Departments

Spawn Point 19

XBOX 360
TOO HUMAN
GEARS OF WAR 2
NINJA GAIDEN II
HAZE
singstar

19 Creature Comforts
Spore's cool Creature Creator makes a mockery of evolution. Check out these five wild creations!

20 System Showdown
We put the PS3 and Xbox 360 head to head in a battle of the best games. See who comes out ahead!

22 Viva Arcades!
The Wii is killing arcades, but these six hot spots—including a carnival-themed dive with pinball tourneys—prove public gaming isn't dead yet.

26 Find Your Girl Gamer
GameGirl.com's Raychul Moore offers up seven tips to finding the gaming girl of your dreams.

Sneak Previews 32

50 Cent: Blood on the Sand
(PS3, Xbox 360) 42
Banjo-Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts (Xbox 360) 32
Fallout 3 (PS3, Xbox 360) 38
Final Fantasy IV (DS) 41
Gears of War 2 (Xbox 360) 40
Ghostbusters: The Video Game
(PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PS2, DS, PC) 41
Guitar Hero: On Tour (DS) 42
Mercenaries 2: World in Flames
(PS3, Xbox 360, PS2, PC) 37
Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe
(PS3, Xbox 360) 36
Samba de Amigo (Wii) 43
Sonic Chronicles:
The Dark Brotherhood (DS) 43
Viva Piñata II (Xbox 360) 40

Reviews 70

Final Fantasy Fables:
Chocobo's Dungeon (Wii) 83
Final Fantasy Tactics A2:
Grimoire of the Rift (DS) 82
Hellboy:
The Science of Evil (PS3) 77
Jake Hunter:
Detective Chronicles (DS) 84
LEGO Indiana Jones:
The Original Adventures (Xbox 360) 78
Mega Man Star Force 2 (DS) 83
Metal Gear Solid 4:
Guns of the Patriots (PS3) 72
Wii Fit (Wii) 80

Opening Shots 6
Big List 85
Feedback 86
Parting Shot 92

Halo Forever

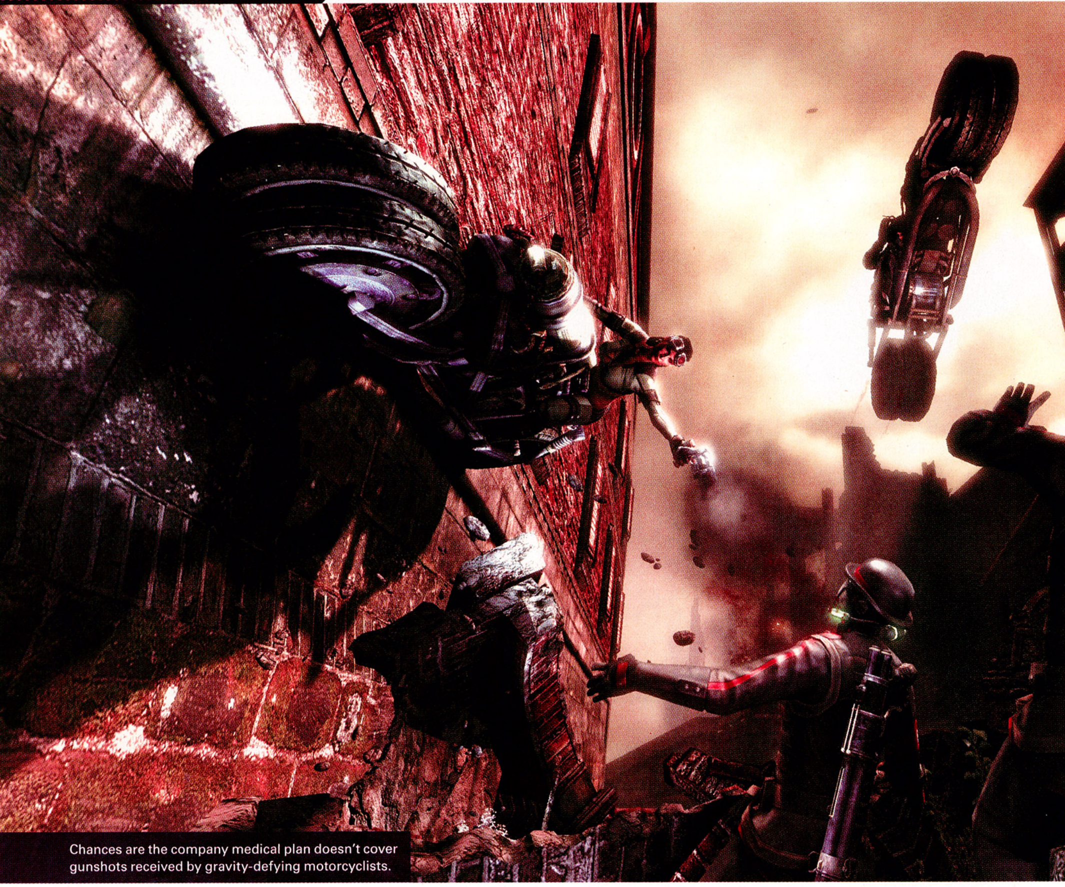
Well, it's that time of the year again: birds are chirping, flowers are blossoming, and Spartans are kicking Covenant ass. *GamePro*'s got the world scoop on Halo Wars, the first Halo game to be developed by a studio other than Bungie.

Halo Wars is a different beast than Halo 3. It's not a first-person shooter, for starters, and you're guiding the actions of an entire army rather than just Master Chief. Despite those big departures, I was surprised to see how much Halo Wars looks and feels like, well, Halo. What was even more surprising was how playable the game was on the Xbox 360 controller, even in the early version I played. I'm not much of a strategy fan (I never played StarCraft!), but I do like the action-packed RTS games such as Warhammer 40K: Dawn of War and Company of Heroes. I predict Halo Wars will go over very well with that crowd, as well as Halo devotees. Read the story for yourself and learn how Ensemble is overcoming some key obstacles in making Halo Wars.

As an added bit of trivia, it was exactly one year ago that GamePro broke the news about Halo 3's shockingly great multiplayer mode. With any luck, next July we'll have the scoop on Halo 4, Halo Chronicles, or some other not-yet-announced Halo game. Fingers crossed, people!

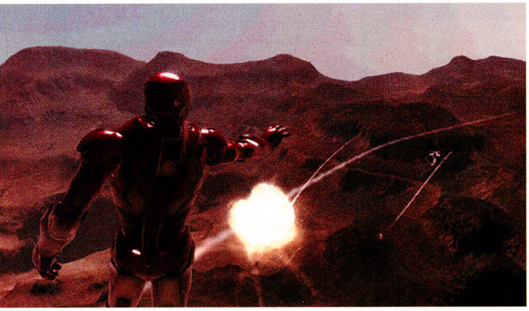
Sid Shuman
Senior Editor

P.S. Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots is unforgettable, a true masterpiece. What are you waiting for? Go play it—*now*!

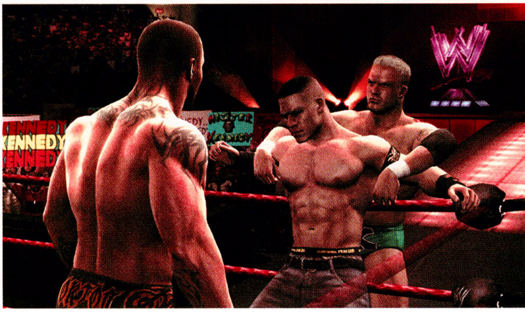


Chances are the company medical plan doesn't cover gunshots received by gravity-defying motorcyclists.

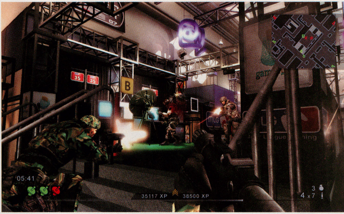
DAMNATION PS3, Xbox 360, PC



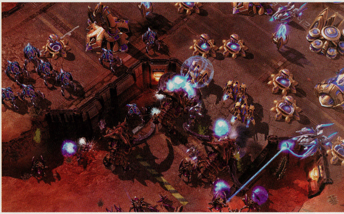
IRON MAN PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PS2, PSP, DS, PC



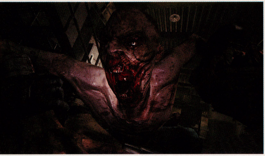
WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2009 PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PS2, PSP, DS


05:41
35117 XP
38500 XP

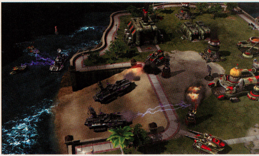
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2 PS3, Xbox 360, PC



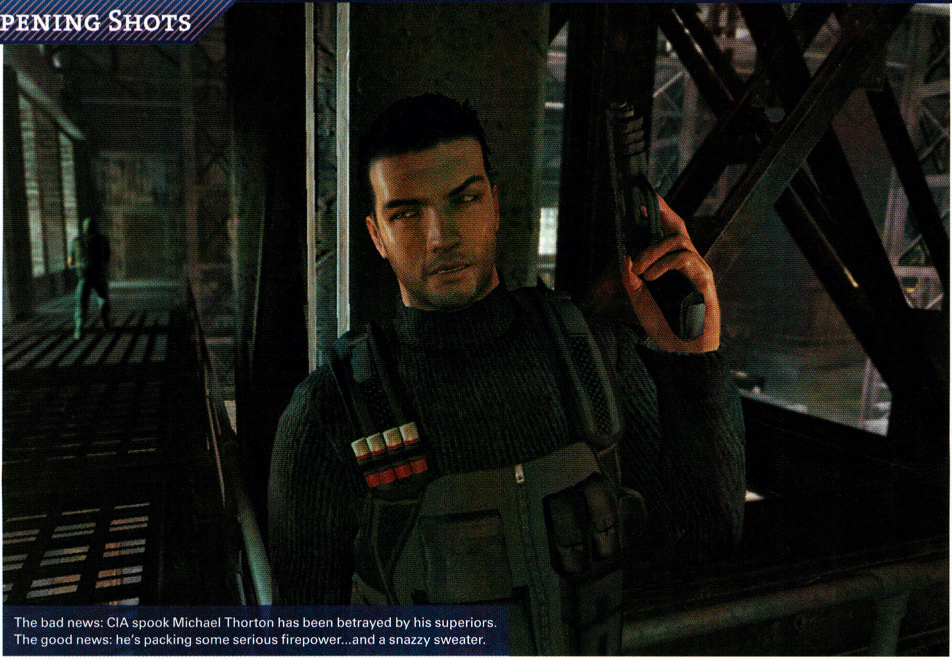
StarCraft II PC



Project Origin PS3, Xbox 360, PC



Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3 PS3, Xbox 360, PC



The bad news: CIA spook Michael Thorton has been betrayed by his superiors. The good news: he's packing some serious firepower...and a snazzy sweater.

ALPHA PROTOCOL PS3, Xbox 360, PC

WARHAMMER: BATTLE MARCH Xbox 360

TOM CLANCY'S H.A.W.X PS3, Xbox 360, PC

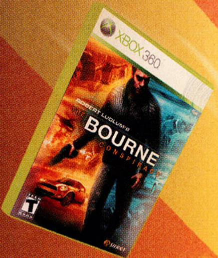
THE INCREDIBLE HULK PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PS2, PC

50 CENT: BLOOD ON THE SAND PS3, Xbox 360

Ever tried lying on a thousand vibrating cell phones?
5
RAIN
...A TINGLING SPEARMINT GUM
Ever tried 5 Gum?
Stimulate Your Senses

5™, FLARE™, COBALT™, RAIN™, and STIMULATE YOUR SENSES™ are trademarks of the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company. ©2007 Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company.

Video Game Rentals Delivered to Your Door


XBOX 360
ROBERT LUDLUM'S
BOURNE
CONSPIRACY

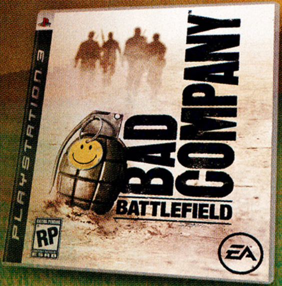
XBOX 360
ONLY ON XBOX 360
XBOX LIVE
NINJA GAIDEN II
RATING PENDING
RP
ESRB
Team NINJA

Over 5,000 titles — 1 | Pick your games online

First Class Mail — 2 | We rush them straight to you

NO Late Fees — 3 | Play games as long as you want

Free Shipping — 4 | Return games and get more from your list


PLAYSTATION 3
BAD COMPANY
BATTLEFIELD
RATING PENDING
RP
ESRB
EA

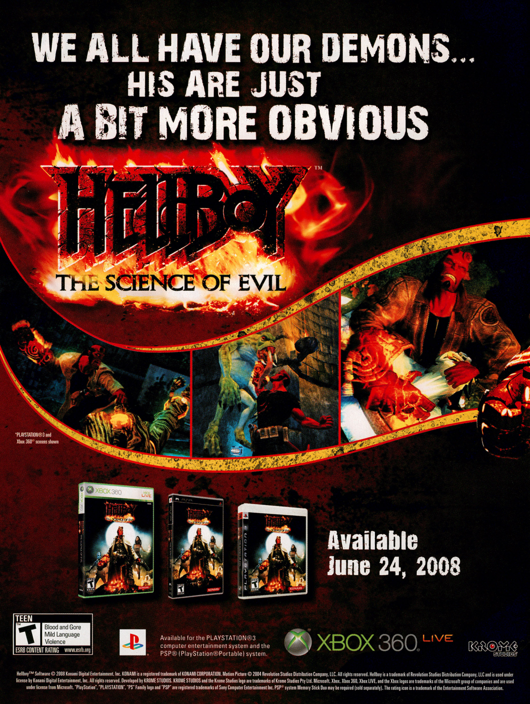
Start now for just $8.95

www.gamefly.com/gamepro

© 2008 GameFly, Inc. GAMEFLY and the GF Logo are trademarks of GameFly, Inc. All other marks used under license by their respective owners. Unless you cancel your account, your credit card will be charged for the price of your game plan at the end of your free trial. You must be 18 years of age or older and reside inside the 50 United States to use the GameFly service.

PLAYSTATION 3 PlayStation 2 PSP PlayStation Portable XBOX 360

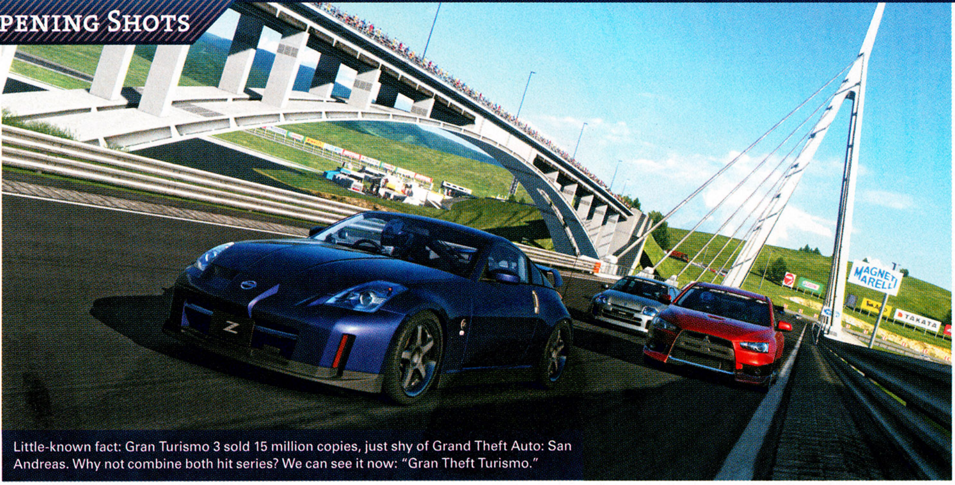
GF GAMEFLY®
PLAYSTATION 3
METAL GEAR SOLID 4
GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS
TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION
MATURE 17+
M
ESRB
KONAMI
XBOX 360
LIVE
ALONE IN THE DARK
ATARI
XBOX 360
LIVE
SID MEIER'S
CIVILIZATION
REVOLUTION
E
2K GAMES
OPEN HERE
GF
PO BOX 60018
CITY OF INDUSTRY, CA 91716-0018
FIRST-CLASS MAIL FLAT
PROCESS ON AFSM 100
1234567
GameFly, Inc.
PO BOX 5326
Culver City, CA 90231-53
XBOX
Wii
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
NINTENDO DS
GAME BOY ADVANCE


WE ALL HAVE OUR DEMONS...
HIS ARE JUST
A BIT MORE OBVIOUS
HELLBOY™
THE SCIENCE OF EVIL
*PLAYSTATION®3 and
Xbox 360® screens shown
XBOX 360
Available
June 24, 2008
TEEN
T
Blood and Gore
Mild Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org
XBOX 360 LIVE
KROME STUDIOS

Available for the PLAYSTATION®3 computer entertainment system and the PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) system.

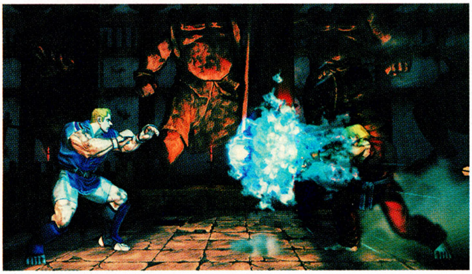
Hellboy™ Software © 2008 Konami Digital Entertainment, Inc. KONAMI is a registered trademark of KONAMI CORPORATION. Motion Picture © 2004 Revolution Studios Distribution Company, LLC. All rights reserved. Hellboy is a trademark of Revolution Studios Distribution Company, LLC and is used under license by Konami Digital Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Developed by KROME STUDIOS. KROME STUDIOS and the Krome Studios logo are trademarks of Krome Studios Pty Ltd. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. PSP® system Memory Stick Duo may be required (sold separately). The rating icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

KONAMI
www.konami.com

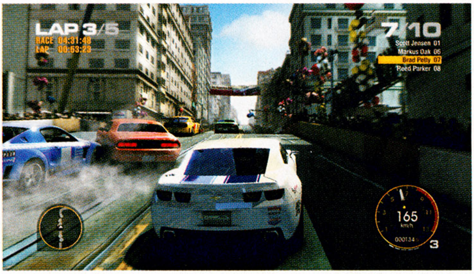

MAGNETI MARELLI
TAKATA

Little-known fact: Gran Turismo 3 sold 15 million copies, just shy of Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas. Why not combine both hit series? We can see it now: "Gran Theft Turismo."

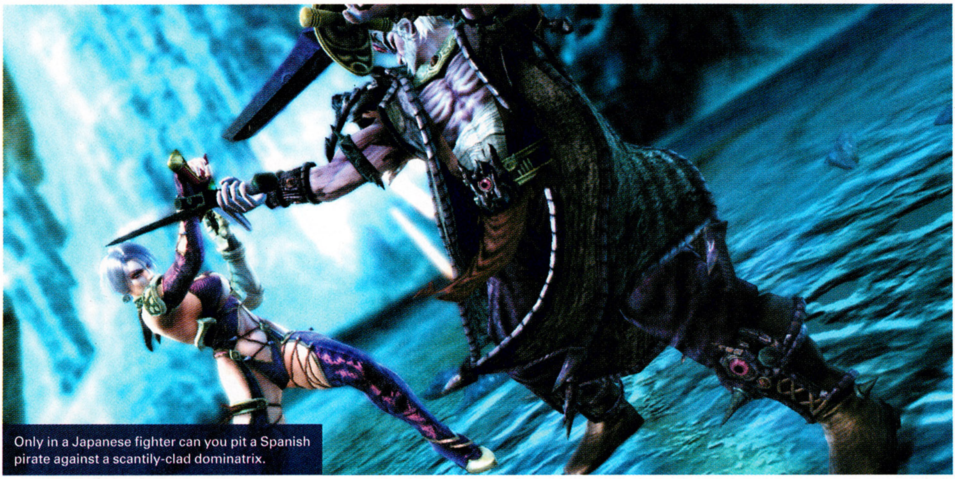
GRAN TURISMO 5 PROLOGUE PS3



STREET FIGHTER IV ARC


LAP 3/5
RACE 04:31:48
LAP 00:53:23
7/10
Scott Jensen 01
Markus Oak 06
Brad Petty 07
Reed Parker 08
165
km/h
3

RACE DRIVER: GRID PS3, XBOX 360, DS, PC



Only in a Japanese fighter can you pit a Spanish pirate against a scantily-clad dominatrix.

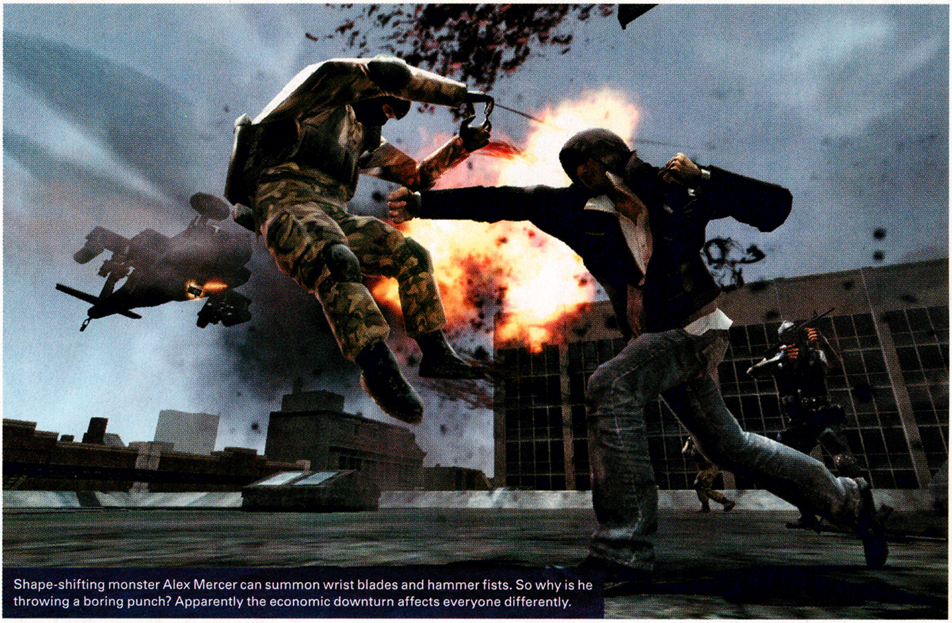
SOULCALIBUR IV PS3, XBOX 360

SHONEN JUMP
NARUTO
ULTIMATE NINJA
Heroes
2
EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE PSP® system!
Join the New Era of Hand Held Fighting this June!
THE PHANTOM FORTRESS
Battle Room
Next
Scroll
Stage summoned.
Third Hokage
New Jutsu! New Secret Technique! New Characters! New gameplay variety!
Explore the Phantom Fortress full of mysterious plots and adventure!
Build your ninja dream team to engage in wireless ad hoc battle!
The Premier NARUTO Fighter takes on a massive, uncharted adventure!
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Cartoon Violence
Crude Humor
Mild Suggestive Themes
Simulated Gambling
PSP
PlayStation Portable
http://narutoheroes2.namcobandaigames.com
CyberConnect2
SHONEN JUMP
VIZ media
BANDAI NAMCO Games

Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2 software © 2006-2008 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. All Rights Reserved. NARUTO artwork and elements © 2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO. All Rights Reserved. "PlayStation", the "PS" Family logo, and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks belong to their respective owners.

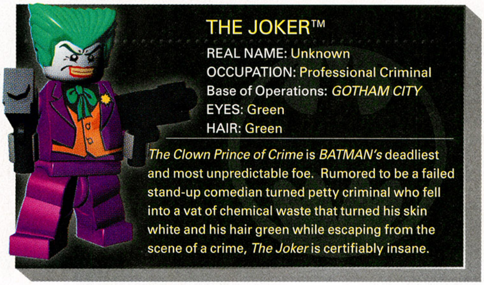
DRAGON BALL Z: BURST LIMIT PS3, XBOX 360

FALLOUT 3 PS3, XBOX 360, PC



Shape-shifting monster Alex Mercer can summon wrist blades and hammer fists. So why is he throwing a boring punch? Apparently the economic downturn affects everyone differently.

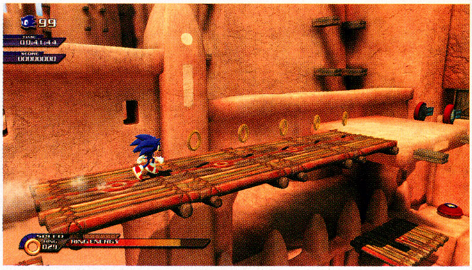
PROTOTYPE PS3, XBOX 360, PC



THE JOKER™

REAL NAME: Unknown
OCCUPATION: Professional Criminal
Base of Operations: *GOTHAM CITY*
EYES: Green
HAIR: Green

The Clown Prince of Crime is *BATMAN's* deadliest and most unpredictable foe. Rumored to be a failed stand-up comedian turned petty criminal who fell into a vat of chemical waste that turned his skin white and his hair green while escaping from the scene of a crime, *The Joker* is certifiably insane.



SONIC UNLEASHED PS3, XBOX 360, Wii, PS2

IF YOU WANT TO DO GREAT THINGS IN YOUR WORLD, SPEND SOME TIME IN OURS.

Please check one

Tell me more about: ☐ Full-Time (1057409) or ☐ Part-Time (1057410) opportunities in the Navy.

First Name Middle Initial Last Name

Address

City State ZIP

Email Address (optional) Date of Birth / /

Home Phone ( ) Best Time to Call a.m. or p.m.

U.S. Citizen: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Years of Education

High School: ☐ Freshman (8) ☐ Sophomore (9) ☐ Junior (10)
☐ Senior (11) ☐ Graduate (12)

College: ☐ Attending (13) ☐ Graduate (16)

Year of Graduation:__________

GPA: ☐ 2.0 – 2.7 ☐ 2.8 – 3.5 ☐ 3.6 – 4.0

NAVY

accelerate your life™

NAVY.COM 1-800-USA-NAVY

Department of the Navy
Navy Recruiting Command
5722 Integrity Drive
Millington TN 38054-5057

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 102 WARMINSTER PA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

NAVY OPPORTUNITY INFORMATION CENTER
PO BOX 3155
WARMINSTER PA 18974-9957

08:16:49
08:16:51
08:16:53
08:16:55
08:16:57
08:16:59
08:17:01
08:17:03
08:17:05
08:17:07
08:17:09
08:17:11

navy.com/seals

do you have what it takes?

© 2006. Paid for by the U.S. Navy. All rights reserved.

DRAGON BALL Z
ドラゴンボール
BURST LIMIT
バーストリミット

COMING JUNE 10, 2008

TEEN
T
Animated Blood
Cartoon Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

FUNIMATION ENTERTAINMENT

TOEI ANIMATION

XBOX 360 LIVE

PLAYSTATION 3

ATARI

Burst Limit © 2008 Dragon Ball Z™: Burst Limit © 2008 Atari, Inc. All rights reserved. © 2008 Bird Studio/SHUEISHA, TOEI Animation, Licensed by FUNimation Productions Ltd. All rights reserved. Dragon Ball, Dragon Ball Z, Dragon Ball GT, and all logos, character names and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of TOEI Animation. Developed by NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. Game © 2008 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. Marketed and distributed by Atari, Inc. New York, N.Y. Atari and the Atari logo are trademarks owned by Atari Interactive, Inc. The ESRB rating icons are registered trademarks of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Use of this product is subject to acceptance of a license agreement. The terms of this license agreement can be found in the product's manual. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Online access requires broadband Internet service and a wireless access point or LAN. Certain limitations apply to Wi-Fi connectivity. User is responsible for Internet service fees. © 2008 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft.

SPAWN POINT

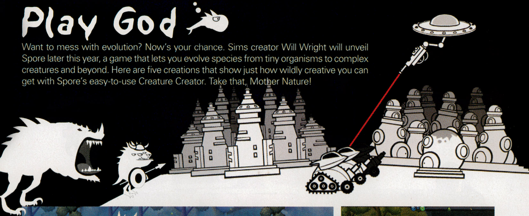
GAMES. GOSSIP. GEAR.

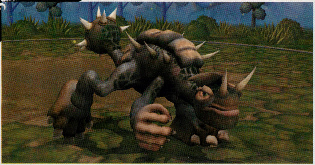
INSIDE SPAWN POINT

System Showdown . . . Page 20
Arcade Fire . . . Page 22
Gaming Gripes . . . Page 24
How to Date a Gamer Girl . . . Page 30

Play God

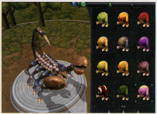
Want to mess with evolution? Now's your chance. Sims creator Will Wright will unveil Spore later this year, a game that lets you evolve species from tiny organisms to complex creatures and beyond. Here are five creations that show just how wildly creative you can get with Spore's easy-to-use Creature Creator. Take that, Mother Nature!





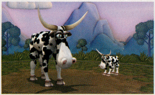
Basher

With a mace-like tail and spikes from head to toe, this guy's got enough custom weaponry to hunt down tasty prey. But those bulky feet could mean losing a speedy victim.



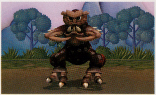
Scorpion

The ugly yet vicious scorpion is equipped with a stinger and claws big enough to snip at unsuspecting prey. But this carnivore only has six legs, two less than the eight-legged scorpion of the normal world. Perhaps ditching the extra limbs increases this creature's top speed.



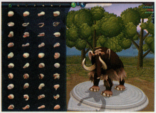
Bossie

This ain't your average Bessie. Armed with razor-sharp horns, don't even think about milking this cow-like creature. Spore gives you the tools to modify everything from skin/fur color to the size of each separate limb, meaning each creation will be completely unique.



Flesh Eater

Wacky creations abound in Spore, this spooky predator being a prime example. Those jagged spikes and blade-like forearms make it look like something out of a lab. And we have to assume its bipedal movement is rather awkward, making it prone to the occasional stumble.



Woolly Mammoth

Don't let extinction get you down. This mini Woolly Mammoth shows just how close you can get to emulating the real thing. Player creations like this will populate each and every Spore world, making it one of the first massively single-player games.

System Showdown

So you own a PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360? Smart move. But how can you tell which console will get more bang for its buck down the road? Here's an easy solution. We weigh each consoles biggest-known games for the next couple years, and here's how to scale tips. Hint: it's PS3 heavy.

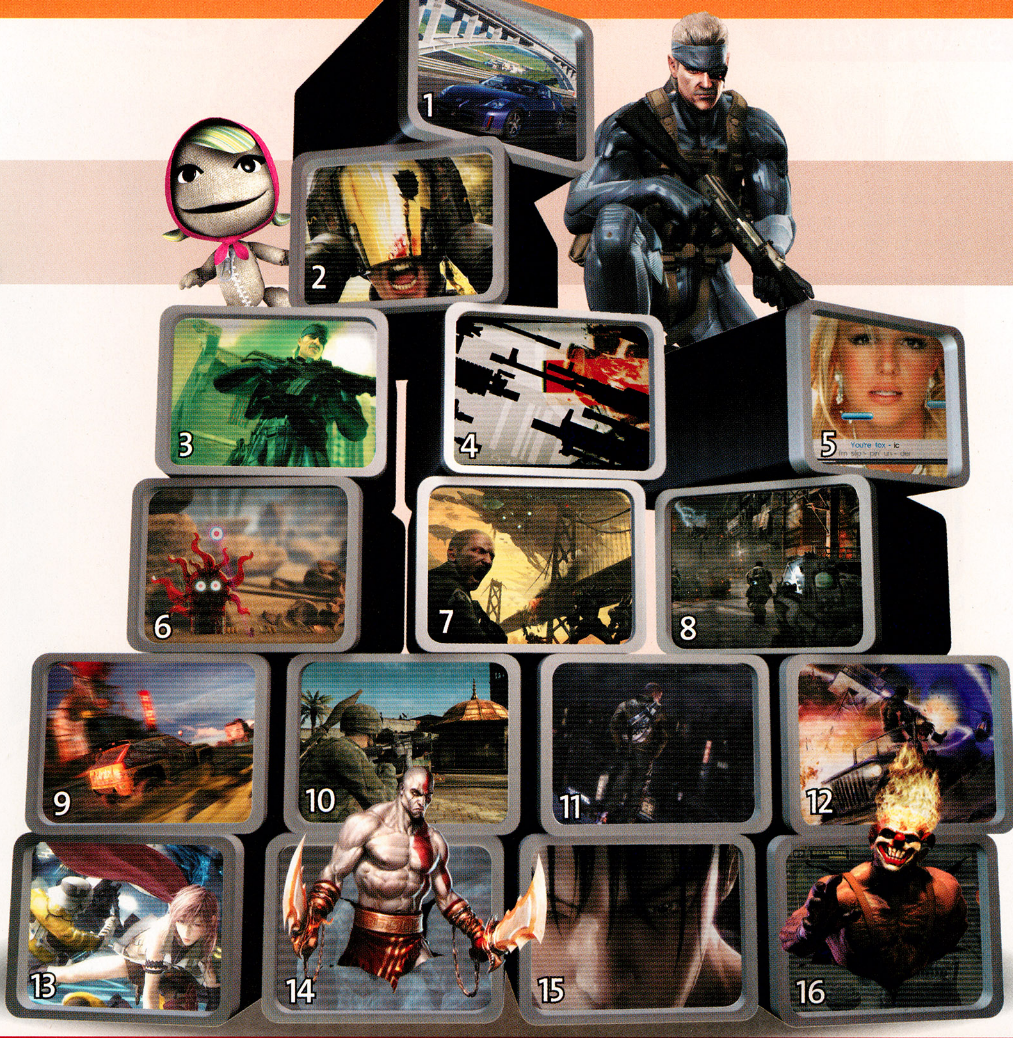
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

XBOX 360

- 1 **NINJA GAIDEN II** The ultimate ninja slasher — JUNE 2008
- 2 **LEFT 4 DEAD** Apocalyptic zombie overload — FALL 2008
- 3 **TOO HUMAN** Cyberpunk God of War remix — AUGUST 2008
- 4 **GEARS OF WAR 2** Epic sci-fi shooter — NOVEMBER 2008
- 5 **FABLE 2** Open-world action RPG — FALL 2008
- 6 **HALO WARS** Master Chief joins the RTS army — FALL 2008
- 7 **TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL CONVICTION** Sam goes Assassin's Creed — FALL 2008
- 8 **ALAN WAKE** Max Payne devs go horror — TBA
- 9 **BANJO-KAZOOIE: NUTS & BOLTS** Cutesy platformer with custom rides — NOVEMBER 2008
- 10 **HALO CHRONICLES** Peter Jackson's episodic gaming debut — TBA

PLAYSTATION 3

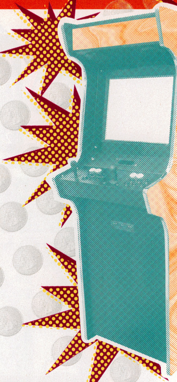
- 1 **GRAN TURISMO 5** Hundreds of cars, dozens of tracks — LATE 2009
- 2 **HAZE** Drug-fueled sci-fi shooter — SUMMER 2008
- 3 **METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS** Stealth-action hits new heights — JUNE 2008

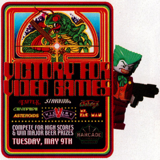


June 2008	4	**Metal Gear Online**	Team shooter with ample sneaking
Late 2008	5	**SingStar**	Online karaoke embarrassment
Fall 2008	6	**LittleBigPlanet**	Make your own Mario
Fall 2008	7	**Resistance 2**	Massive shooter with multiple campaigns
Fall 2008	8	**Killzone 2**	Cult shooter gets big-budget Halo treatment
Fall 2008	9	**MotorStorm Pacific Rift**	Rip through jungles in frenzied races
September 2008	10	**SOCOM Confrontation**	Army shooter with online focus
Late 2008	11	**inFamous**	Super hero or super villain? Your choice
TBA	12	**The Agency**	Spy MMO shooter from Everquest vets
2009	13	**Final Fantasy XIII**	The king of the RPGs is only on PS3
2009	14	**God of War III**	Kratos goes god-killer in hack-n-slash epic
2009	15	**Tekken 6**	Classic brawler gets massive upgrade
2009	16	**Twisted Metal**	Car combat from God of War creator

ARCADE FIRE

Arcades are dying, thanks to the growing popularity of home consoles. But if you're still looking to drop mad quarters, here are some of the best remaining places to get your public game on. **By Chris Morrell**



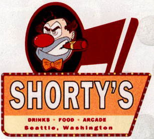


Barcade

New York, NY

WHY: Trendy warehouse-style bar/arcade with a large selection of classic arcade games and very tasty microbrews.

BONUS: Tetris, Rampage, Burger Time, Gauntlet; occasional free pizza.



Shorty's

Seattle, WA

WHY: Coney Island carnival-themed arcade mixes classic cabinets, pinball, food, and drinks. Annual pinball tournaments draw master flippers.

BONUS: Unique gut-stuffers include chili nachos, spicy pepper cheese dogs, veggie dogs, and organic TV dinners.

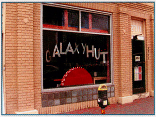
ARCADE INFINITY

Arcade Infinity

Rowland Heights, CA

WHY: Huge section of music and rhythm games including rare Japanese imports. Good prices; good food.

BONUS: Bizarrely addictive Typing of the Dead, a keyboard-input mod of House of the Dead 2.



Galaxy Hut

Arlington, VA

WHY: Classic arcade tables, specialty beers, delicious bar food, and lots of live music.

BONUS: Great place to see local indie bands.

Sluggers

Chicago, IL

WHY: Not for the nerdy, Sluggers is the biggest jock-cade. Skee-ball, air hockey, electronic basketball, and a batting cage fill the second floor above the main bar.

BONUS: Dueling Pianos; drunken sing-along on weekends and after Cubs games; killer deep-dish pizza.

Planet Zero Anime Center

Houston, TX

WHY: Chock full of imports; Planet Zero caters to the Japanese Anime crowd featuring a wide selection of the latest game cabinets including new Tekken 6 and Arcana Heart 2 machines.

BONUS: Frequent exclusive movie screenings.

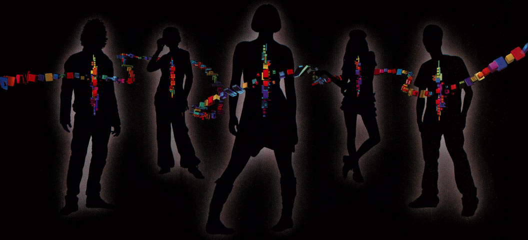
Geek Speak 2.0

Big words, small type.

DVI: Short for "Digital Visual Interface," a connection standard designed to transport a video feed from one device to another, like a console to a television, without requiring a quality-degrading trip as an analog signal.

Cel-shading: A 3D image rendering process that simulates the pen strokes and fill colors of a comic book instead of the behavior of light in the real world, and thus gives the game world a distinctive cartoonish look.

EULA: Short for "End-User License Agreement;" a contract between the publisher of a piece of software and a user. Gamers are most often exposed to such lengthy legalese when they venture online and agree to abide by a list of rules.



Make your digital world a friendlier place with AT&T.

Take MySpace™ with you

Stay on top of messages and pix – and even update your blog – while you're out and about, thanks to your AT&T phone. After all, there are over 100 million people on MySpace. So you've got to make sure your space stays current.

To get it:
text MS to 514

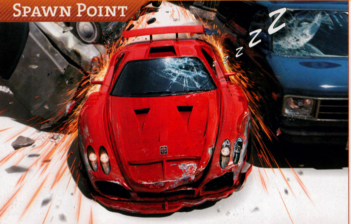
Facebook® on the go

Facebook helps you keep up with all your friends. And with AT&T, it's easy to keep up with Facebook. Check your profile and stay connected while you're on the move, right from your phone.

To get it:
text FB to 514

What can AT&T do for your digital world?℠
att.com/digitalworld

Standard messaging rates apply. Facebook is a registered trademark of Facebook, Inc. Service provided by AT&T Mobility. ©2008 AT&T Intellectual Property. All rights reserved. AT&T and the AT&T logo are trademarks of AT&T Intellectual Property.



GAMING GRIPES

Developers create the games we spend countless hours enjoying, but sometimes they fall asleep at the wheel. Here are a few solutions to our biggest pet peeves. **By Cameron Lewis**

STOP with the weak checkpoint systems. Playing the same 10 minutes of game over and over again because you won't let us save when we want isn't fun, it's aggravating. Alternatively, work on difficulty balance so we're not breezing through nine minutes just to die in the suddenly ridiculously difficult tenth minute.

STOP trimming content from your game at the last minute just so you can justify charging for downloadable levels, guns, or cars in a couple of months. The 108 kilobyte download is a dead giveaway that you're charging for content that's already on the disc we bought.

STOP forcing us to sit through screen after screen of middleware logos just to get to the main menu, or endure the same unskippable instructional session cutscene every time we retry a mission. At least let us bypass these gratuitous elements with the Start button.

STOP assuming that online play is everything. We all love the co-op and multiplayer modes, but it better be pretty damn special if we're supposed to drop our hard-earned $60 on a game with a solo campaign that only lasts five hours, or rock-stupid A.I. allies that get stuck on their own shadows.

STOP calling in random co-workers instead of professionals to do the voices of in-game characters. While you're at it, work on your dialogue: randomly distributing F-bombs throughout the script doesn't make you David Mamet (or, for that matter, Quentin Tarantino.

SUCKS OR RULES

Changing the world, one insult at a time

SUCKS

PC Gaming: When even long-time PC stalwarts like id Software announce that they simply can't afford to focus exclusively on the more powerful but increasingly complicated platform, you know the end of an era threatens from just around the corner. **SUCKS**

Bully: Dunce Edition: The retread of Rockstar's underplayed gem should've given Jimmy Hopkins a vital second life, but instead subjected players to glitches, crashes, and frame rate problems, and the game's first patch just made matters worse. **SUCKS**

Parental Priorities: According to a poll on parental gaming site What They Play, America's parents are more concerned that their kids will be exposed to scenes depicting natural human sexuality than depraved violence. How do they think their kids were created, anyway? **SUCKS**

RULES

Stephen King: The best-selling horror author penned an opinion piece for *Entertainment Weekly* that called out politicians and the media for treating video games and other forms of pop culture as a "whipping boy" for their own contrived agendas. **RULES**

Interplay: The struggling publisher that once rode high on the success of Baldur's Gate and innumerable other classics is staging a comeback that includes an MMO set in the Fallout universe, and sequels for MDK, Earthworm Jim, Descent, and Dark Alliance. **RULES**

DualShock 3: After all that nonsense about how motion sensitivity with force feedback was "impossible," Sony's DualShock 3 is finally on store shelves, and a whole bunch of previously released games already support the welcome return of handheld rumble. **RULES**

What's *your* opinion?
Vote for yourself on **SucksorRules.com**

GAMES TO DIE FOR

Our current obsessions

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV (PS3, XBOX 360)
It's finally here, and it's huge. With an RPG-length solo story line, an enormous open-ended city to play in, and 15 different multiplayer modes, Rockstar's latest demands some serious attention.

OKAMI (Wii)
The Wii's gesturing controls are tailor-made for this wolf's world of mystical painting and Zelda-style adventuring. Don't let this remarkable game, originally released on the PS2, pass you by a second time.

IKARUGA (XBOX 360)
This Xbox Live Arcade retread of the Dreamcast original might be only five levels long, but it's quite possibly the true peak of two-dimensional shoot-em-up action, and it's just $10.

1 Jar, 2 Solutions…
The right answer to acne every time.

Concentrated Gel: intensive treatment for acne-prone areas
Alcohol-Free Pads daily cleansing and prevention without irritation
NEW!
Dual Solutions
2-STAGE SYSTEM!
STRIDEX
INTENSIVE ACNE REPAIR
1 CLEANSING PADS
2 GEL
1 CLEANSING PADS IN JAR
2 MEDICATED GEL IN CAP

Dual Solutions offers two unique complexion products:

- Daily Pore Control – Gentle daily cleansing & concentrated blackhead treatment
- Intensive Acne Repair – Maximum strength daily cleansing & concentrated acne therapy

Stridex Dual Solutions does what no single product can because it's actually two answers to acne in one unique jar.

With Dual Solutions, you can fight acne the best way every time – use the pads for daily cleansing and the gel to deep-treat trouble spots.

STRIDEX®

clear complexion with comfort™

STRIDEX
STRIDEX

Use as directed. © 2008 Blistex Inc

SAVE $1 on STRIDEX® Dual Solutions™

MANUFACTURER'S COUPON / EXPIRATION DATE 9/30/08

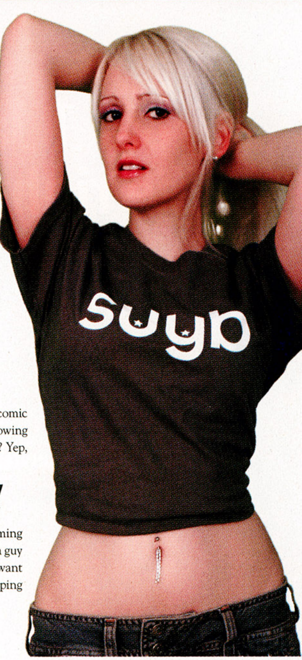
RETAILER: Blistex® Inc. will reimburse you for the face value of this coupon plus 8¢ if submitted as a part payment on Stridex® Dual Solutions™ in compliance with our redemption policy. Copies available upon request. Void if copied, prohibited or regulated. Coupon may not be assigned or transferred by you. Cash value 1/100 cent. Send to Blistex Inc., P.O. Box 880296, El Paso, TX 88588-0296. Good only on indicated Stridex Dual Solutions™ any other use constitutes fraud. Limit one coupon per purchase.

5 41388 35876 0

0041388-230272

How To: Date a Gamer Girl

Girls that game seem rarer than a Killtacular in Halo, but maybe you're just not looking hard enough. More women are gaming every day, so the time is ripe to impress. GameGirl.com's Raychul Moore tips us off to finding the gamer girl of your dreams.



1 *Know your stuff...*

Impress her with your knowledge of games, especially the ones she's most interested in. Once I hosted a little video-game trivia at a game show, then went home and quizzed my boyfriend on the same questions, and it was a huge turn on when he knew all the answers. Don't be afraid to pull out your geek knowledge

2 *...but don't brag*

On that same note, watch yourself. No one likes a bragger. She doesn't care how many times you chain-sawed a little kid on Live in Gears of War, or what level your character is in World of Warcraft. Keep it simple and impressive, not over-exaggerated and pathetic.

3 *Play with, not against*

When you're playing together, don't always try to kick her ass (unless she brings on the challenge). Play with her, without being cocky. Gamer chicks want a guy they can play games with and at times actually beat, not a guy who makes it their mission to destroy them. That's no fun, and you wouldn't like if the roles were reversed.

4 *Girls like gifts*

Find out her favorite games and characters, and then score some gifts that compliment them. My favorite gamer gift is a Mario Galaxy Luma plushy that my boyfriend made for me. Gifts are a great way into a girl's heart, and a game-related gift is the best way into a gamer girl's heart.

5 *Include her in your geeky obsessions*

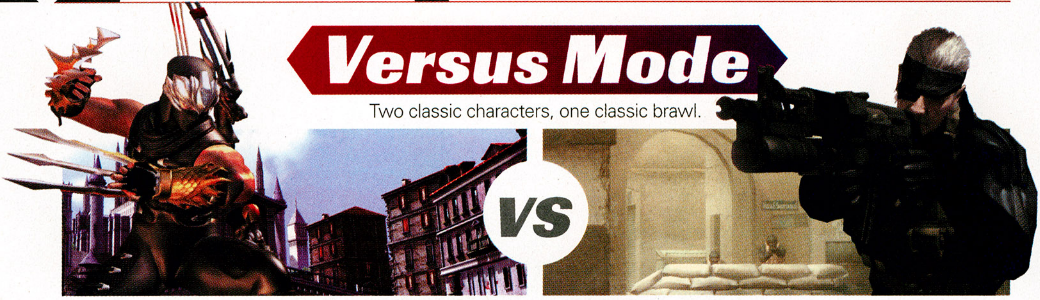
Chances are she has the same geeky interests you do. The local comic book store's re-opening? Invite her. An independent theater's showing the original *Star Wars*? Bring her! A friend's having a LAN party? Yep, you guessed it.

6 *Treat her like a girl*

Even though she wants to be included in your geeky and gaming passions, remember, we are girls. Just because we game like a guy doesn't mean we want to be treated like your buddies. We want to be held and cuddled, and told that we are pretty. No burping matches…that's just gross.

7 *Don't judge*

So she can hold her own in Halo, but she also wants to play Spyro! Don't judge her love for cutesy games. It's in our blood! Who knows, maybe you just might enjoy them. You liked Viva Piñata and Animal Crossing, right? Here's a tip: if you see her getting frustrated with something in a game, offer to help. Who knows, maybe you are good at what she isn't and vice-versa. Then instantly that single-player game turns into a fun group effort.



Versus Mode

Two classic characters, one classic brawl.

	Ryu Hayabusa (Ninja Gaiden II)			**Solid Snake** (Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots)
Life Meter	Fast as lightning, and in peak physical condition.	■	□	Suffering from premature aging as a result of his cloned origins.
Arsenal	Swords, talons, bow and arrow, shurikens, and much more.	□	■	Two fists and a variety of ballistic weapons.
Lethal Style	Brutal decapitations and amputations with no hesitation.	■	□	Quiet and business-like snapping of necks when necessary.
Special Abilities	Can run on water and charge arrows with "essence."	□	■	Equipped with the stealth suit, a robotic drone helper, and Solid Eye visual aid.
Off Hours	Long history in the Dead or Alive tournament series.	■	□	Lets off steam pounding Nintendo mascots in Super Smash Bros. Brawl.

OUTCOME:

Poor old Snake's trying to grab forty winks in his trusty steel drum when Ryu spins onto the scene like a blood-soaked whirling dervish, shrieking with all of the stealthy cunning of an asylum patient. Snake leaps out, intending to roll into a secure firing position, but elderly nerves pinch easily. The aged hero has enough time to wince and let out a gruff complaint before Ryu frees his head from his neck with a meaty slice, and palms it into the drum for two points.

DECISION: Ryu Hayabusa > > >

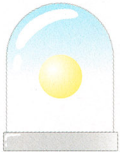
ALONE
IN
THE DARK
JUNE 24, 2008
CENTRALDARK.COM
MATURE
17+ ™
M
Blood and Gore
Strong Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING
www.esrb.org
Games for Windows
Wii
XBOX 360
PlayStation 2
ATARI

© 2008 Atari Interactive, Inc. All rights reserved. Atari and the Atari logo are trademarks owned by Atari Interactive, Inc. Alone in the Dark is a registered trademark owned by Infogrames Entertainment SA in the US and other territories. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.The ESRB rating icons are registered trademarks of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Use of this product is subject to acceptance of a license agreement. The terms of this license agreement can be found in the product's manual. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. © 2008 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

9 PRECIOUS POWER-UPS

Normality sucks. That's why these nine awesome game power-ups earn classic recognition and our personal kudos.

POWER PELLET

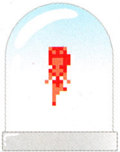


FROM: Pac-Man

EFFECT: Ability to munch ghosts; enemies become disoriented and slow

DRAWBACK: Habit-forming; temptation to eat too early

FAERIE

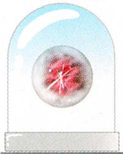


FROM: The Legend of Zelda

EFFECT: Completely restores health; stops obnoxious beeping

DRAWBACK: Set the stage for future annoying Zelda fairies

OVERSHIELD



FROM: Halo

EFFECT: Increases armor; invincible for three seconds after acquiring

DRAWBACK: Rapidly depletes in multiplayer

QUAD DAMAGE

FROM: Quake series

EFFECT: Dramatically magnifies damage; pop enemies like a gore-filled balloon

DRAWBACK: You glow blue and emit lighting bolts, making you an irresistible target

SPREAD GUN

FROM: Contra

EFFECT: Arc-like Shotgun blasts cover massive area

DRAWBACK: Other weapons become less appealing

STAR POWER

FROM: Guitar Hero

EFFECT: Rock like Zep from ‘71; nearly impossible to fail during use

DRAWBACK: Preemptive use can be disastrous

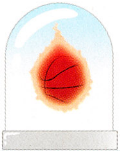
SPIRIT BALLS

FROM: Altered Beast

EFFECT: Grab three and morph into super beast for pure pwnage

DRAWBACK: Boss Neff yanks them away at each level's end

ON FIRE!



FROM: NBA Jam

EFFECT: Sink shots like Jordan on 'roids; unlimited "turbo;" goaltending A-OK!

DRAWBACK: En feugo lost when other team scores

STARMAN

FROM: Super Mario Bros., Super Mario Kart, Super Mario Strikers

EFFECT: Short spurt of invincibility; temporarily increased speed (Mario Kart, Mario Strikers); momentary flashiness

DRAWBACK: May cause overconfidence

THE BIG 5

We sound off...

1 UBISOFT BUYS THE TOM CLANCY NAME

In a deal worth $94 million, Ubisoft acquired the right to use the Tom Clancy name in perpetuity for any and all games they might develop from this point on, which will save them over $7 million in royalty payments each year.

THE VERDICT: If Ubisoft can continue to deliver the goods in the Rainbow Six, Ghost Recon, and Splinter Cell series, and nail the upcoming EndWar and H.A.W.X. games, they just bought the right to print money.

2 360 SALES DOUBLE IN EUROPE

After slashing prices on all three models, sales figures for Microsoft's Xbox 360 in European territories more than doubled.

THE VERDICT: Stop the presses: people buy the things they want when they become more affordable. Go figure!

3 XBOX LIVE CHEATERS CATCH A BEATING

After some players found a way to elevate their gamerscores by hacking saved game files, Microsoft reset offending scores to zero, locked access to the affected achievements from cheaters, and slapped each gamertag with a "cheater" label.

THE VERDICT: It's refreshing to see Microsoft act with swift and justifiably harsh justice on this issue, even if the offenders will most likely just create new gamertags.

4 ROCKSTAR GAMES AND AMAZON PARTNER UP

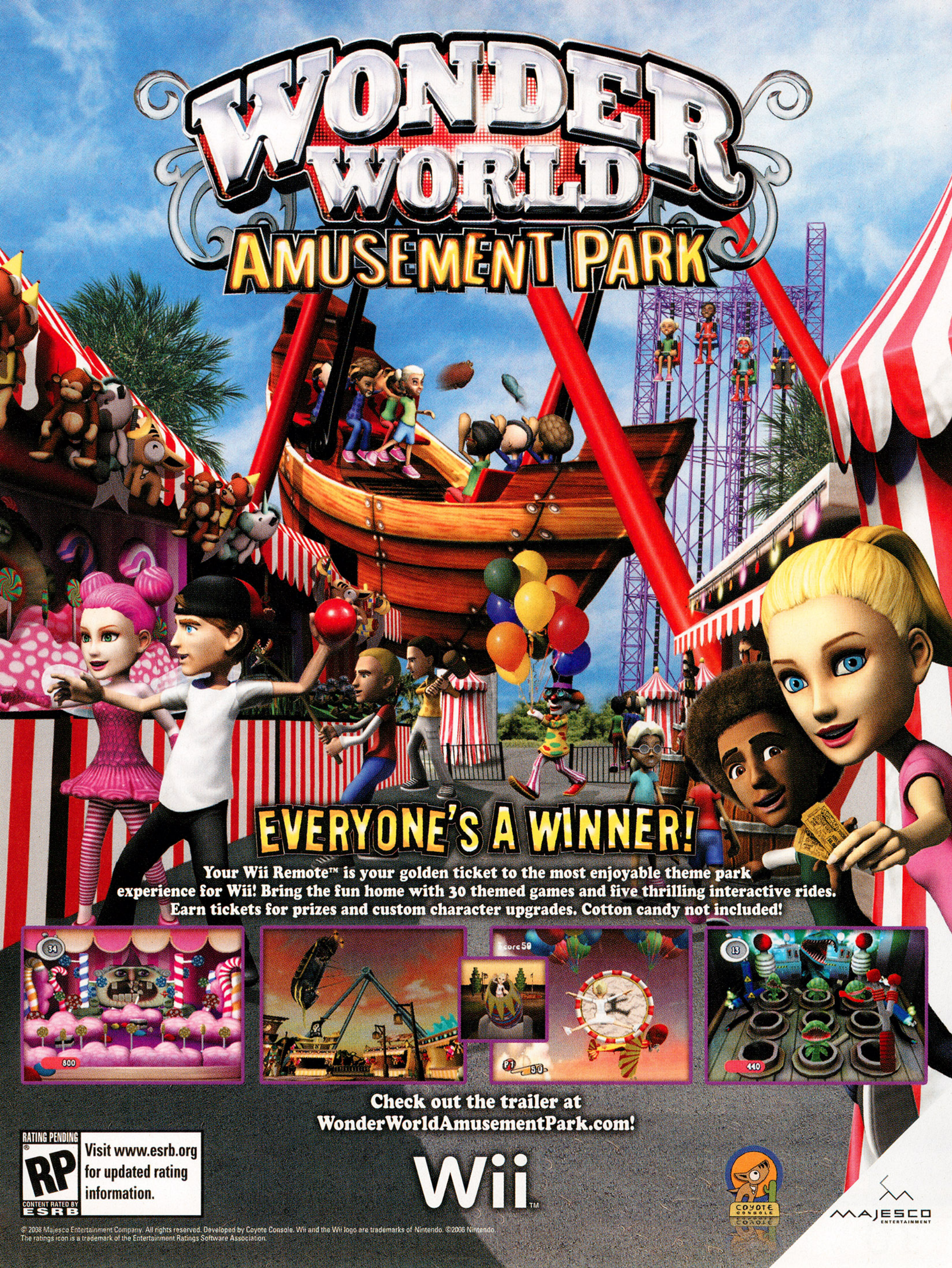
The new ZiT service will let Grand Theft Auto IV players mark their favorite tunes from the game's huge 150-song soundtrack for later purchase from Amazon at 99 cents each. All songs will be free of DRM entanglements.

THE VERDICT: We were wishing for precisely this functionality in Crackdown. Given the ludicrously esoteric track lists that power the many radio stations of Liberty City, we're predicting there'll be something for everyone.

5 PLAYSTATION 3 IMPROVEMENTS

The PlayStation 3 continued to show is flexibility as an evolving platform by adding support for Blu-ray Profile 2.0 and DTS-HD audio, and upgrading the PlayStation Store to be friendlier and faster.

THE VERDICT: The lack of downloadable rentals aside, the PS3 is dominating the all-purpose set-top box aspects of this generation, and some highly anticipated releases could help tilt the gaming court in their favor in the not-too-distant future.


WONDER WORLD
AMUSEMENT PARK
EVERYONE'S A WINNER!
34
800
Score 50
P1
50
13
440
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Wii™
COYOTE CONSOLE
MAJESCO
ENTERTAINMENT

Your Wii Remote™ is your golden ticket to the most enjoyable theme park experience for Wii! Bring the fun home with 30 themed games and five thrilling interactive rides. Earn tickets for prizes and custom character upgrades. Cotton candy not included!

Check out the trailer at WonderWorldAmusementPark.com!

Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

© 2008 Majesco Entertainment Company. All rights reserved. Developed by Coyote Console. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo.
The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Ratings Software Association.

Green Geek

Green is in. Unfortunately gaming consumes a mega load of power. Last year household electronics, which includes mega energy-using culprits like TVs and video-game consoles, were responsible for 11 percent of U.S. household energy consumption. And that number is growing every year. But with our simple tips, you'll find it's easy being green. **By Chris Morell**

Ban the Battery: Millions of everyday batteries wind up corroding the planet's landfills every year. The simple solution: go rechargeable. The Xbox 360 and Wii both have simple rechargeable solutions, and there are even USB-enabled rechargeable batteries that can be used in any household remote and applicable game controller.

Ditch the Plasma: Plasma TVs don't use as much energy as those old tube sets, but they aren't the greenest solution. Instead, go with a rear-projection or LCD TV, then turn the backlight brightness down to maximize your greenness.

Trade Instead of Buy: Save paper and money by using sites like Swaptree.com to trade games (as well as books, movies, and music) with other users for free. All you pay is shipping, and the growing library hosts even the newest console, PC, and Mac games.

USBCELL
USBCELL
moixa

Turn Standby Off: When your PS3's in standby mode—or even off—it can leak electricity. Flip the switch off or better yet, turn off your power strip and shut down everything.

Go Wii: The Nintendo Wii uses a miniscule amount of power compared to the PS3 and Xbox 360—almost nine times less. Yet another reason to indulge in Super Smash Bros. Brawl.

OMG movies
MOVIES FOR GAMERS

Indiana Jones
MUST SEE

INDIANA JONES: THE ADVENTURE COLLECTION

Hot on the heels of Indy's latest film adventure comes this new collection of the original trilogy, featuring galleries, featurettes, and other behind-the-scenes extras, some never seen before.
indianajones.com
$48.99

DIRTY HARRY ULTIMATE COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Five films with Clint Eastwood's iconic Harry Callahan—*Dirty Harry, Magnum Force, The Enforcer, Sudden Impact*, and *The Dead Pool*—all remastered and packed with extras. Movies are available separately on standard definition; *Dirty Harry* is the only title available separately on Blu-ray.
warnerhomevideo.com/dirtyharry
$74.92 (DVD); $129.95 (Blu-ray)

STATIC

By Sid Shuman

...gPlanet...LittleBigPlanet...LittleBigPlanet... • **The *GamePro* Show lives!** It's our new weekly roundtable video program found exclusively on GamePro.com. We'll be rotating in our crew of bleary-eyed *GamePro* editors, and maybe even a game developer or two, to chat about hot topics in gaming. Check it out... • **Wait—Namco's making a new Splatterhouse? So awesome.** For my money, the best game was Splatterhouse 3, thanks to its dynamic plot. In one level, your girlfriend is being eaten alive from the inside-out by a demonic "boreworm." As you race through the house to save her, you receive nasty descriptions of what organ the boreworm is currently feasting on. Get there too late and you'll be informed that "the boreworm squirms bloated in Jennifer's skull." God, that's horrible! Here's hoping Namco can tap into that skin-crawling mood for the new Splatterhouse... • **Sub-Zero battling Superman?** It's true. Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe is a neat concept on paper, and I love the super-intense gameplay footage we've seen so far, but removing the gore and fatalities seems like a boneheaded move to me. Mortal Kombat without gushing blood and severed spines? What's the world coming to?... • **Heard about this new motion-sensing Xbox 360 controller?** It's unofficial speculation, of course, but there's strong evidence that Microsoft is prototyping a Wii Remote-like device for the Xbox 360. I hope it's not true, but Microsoft has an unfortunate corporate history of copycatting successful products, then adding new features to "improve" them (hi Zune!). If Microsoft can build a better, more intuitive evolution of the Wii Remote, then I'm all for it—after all, the Wii Remote ain't perfect. But if this turns into a cynical cash-in on the Wii hysteria, it'll be so very lame... • **The best game nobody's talking about (yet): Banjo-Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts.** The best part is that you can build your own vehicles, mixing-and-matching parts to get crazy combinations, like a rocket-powered UFO with a deployable amphibious glider. That is some kind of nuts... • **It's probably way too early to talk about 2008's "Game of the Year," but what the hell.** From everything I've seen and played, it sure looks like the big shoot-out this year will be between Grand Theft Auto IV and Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots for Game of the Year honors. Both games are beautifully produced and make great strides over their predecessors... • **What's this about the new Call of Duty game?** It's apparently 1) not "Call of Duty 5" and 2) heading back to World War II. Are weapon mods even possible with those cruddy old WWII-era weapons? Color me skeptical, but all secrets will soon be revealed... • **Resistance 2...Resistance 2...Resist...**

Pwned this month:
MK vs. DC
Xbox 360 Wii Remote
Gamers' wallets

e-mail Sid:
sid_shuman@gamepro.com

Bid Farewell to Your Bloodstained Past.

FINAL FANTASY IV

NEW CG
NEW ABILITIES
FULLY REMADE IN 3D

JULY 22, 2008

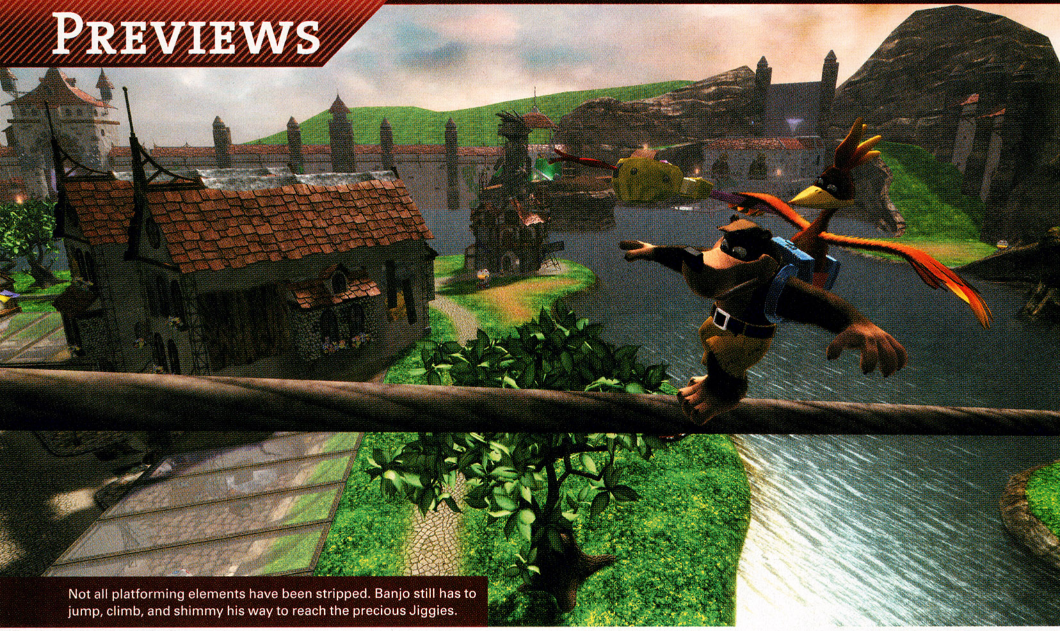
EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Alcohol Reference
Fantasy Violence
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes

http://na.square-enix.com/ff4

SQUARE ENIX.
NINTENDO DS™

©1991, 2007, 2008 SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. All Rights Reserved. FINAL FANTASY, SQUARE ENIX, and the SQUARE ENIX logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Square Enix Co., Ltd. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo.



Not all platforming elements have been stripped. Banjo still has to jump, climb, and shimmy his way to reach the precious Jiggies.

BANJO-KAZOOIE: NUTS & BOLTS

Banjo's new ride is…whatever you make.

Xbox 360

■ Developer: Rare ■ Publisher: Microsoft ■ Release Date: November

Fans of the Banjo-Kazooie series will be surprised to find that Banjo-Kazooie 3 is neither what you anticipated nor expected. Even I assumed the newest Banjo to be a cooperative platformer starring Banjo and Kazooie, a cartoony bear and bird. That is not the case. This is Banjo-Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts. Why Nuts & Bolts? Check it out…

Developer Rare (Perfect Dark Zero, Viva Piñata) is making this game so different you have to get your hands on it to grasp the concept. There is no co-op, the graphics are better, but craziest of all… the traditional platforming elements are almost completely gone. What Rare has done with Banjo-Kazooie is transfer the traditional platforming elements of the game into creating and driving vehicles. I know it sounds insane, but it works in a quirky gamer-friendly kind of way.

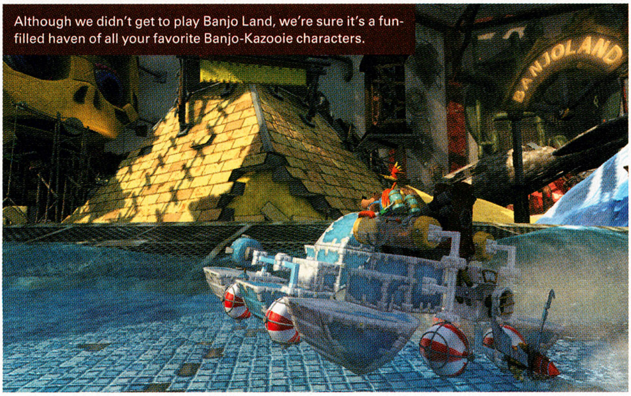
PLAY. CREATE. DRIVE.

Much like the motto of LittleBigPlanet—Play. Create. Share.—the newest Banjo-Kazooie is all about playing, creating, and driving user-generated vehicles built from a palette of different "car parts." But cars aren't the only vehicles you can create. Boats, planes, helicopters…it's all up to your imagination.

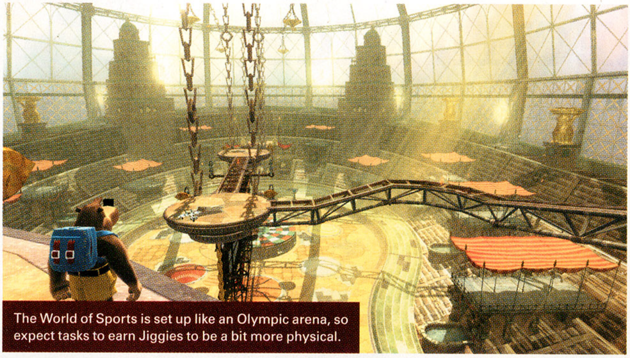
Here's how it works. Mumbo Jumbo, the series' shaman quit his day job and now works as a mechanic. He still retains the powers of a witch doctor, which allows him to piece together some very interesting vehicles for Banjo, for example, a jet-propelled UFO with a deployable glider. To create a vehicle is simply a matter of pressing up on the directional-pad to enter Mumbo's garage. In the garage, you can jump right into building a kick-ass monster truck, paint your hot rod, or load up a preset provided by Rare mechanics.

BANJO THE BUILDER

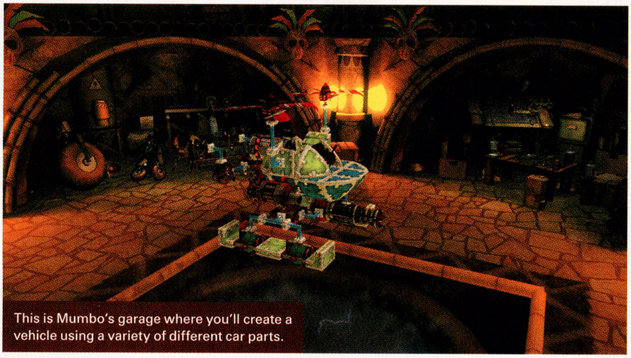
The basic car parts required to create a functional vehicle are all block shaped, square or rectangle. To create a functional vehicle, you must install these parts: a driver's seat, a fuel system, and an engine. Wheels are not always necessary (think boat or hovercraft), and body pieces help fill out a vehicle and provide extra space to install bigger fuel drums or multiple engines.



Although we didn't get to play Banjo Land, we're sure it's a fun-filled haven of all your favorite Banjo-Kazooie characters.



The World of Sports is set up like an Olympic arena, so expect tasks to earn Jiggies to be a bit more physical.



This is Mumbo's garage where you'll create a vehicle using a variety of different car parts.

In vehicle edit mode, the craft floats in midair as you rotate the camera around attaching different parts. Rare wanted the vehicle creation process to be easy, and thanks to Mumbo's magic you don't have to connect parts realistically—the engine doesn't have to be connected directly to the fuel. You can place parts wherever you want on the vehicle and it will still function.

Vehicle parts are broken up into numerous categories: body, tires, fuel, seats, propulsion (engines), gadgets, weapons, ammo, and more. Body parts are light or heavy, which affects your vehicle's weight and armor. Tires range from slick to spiked and affect how your vehicle drives on different surfaces. Fuel comes in different sizes, ammo as well. The larger the fuel drum, the longer you can drive. Engines produce power, so the bigger the better. Gadgets include things like spotlights and gyroscopes that provide additional stabilization when flying. Now mix up all this with a realistic physics engine and you've got one crazy ride.

Big Surprise, Eh?

The vehicle creation is a huge surprise for Banjo-Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts, but this shouldn't be: Gruntilda is mucking things up again and Banjo still collects music notes to unlock golden puzzle Jiggies and fight the power. Again, the goal of the game is to collect all the Jiggies by completing a variety of tasks. These tasks are completely different than previous Banjo games because of the addition of vehicles.

One such task requires Banjo to collect as many coconuts as possible in a limited time. The task begins atop a hill and the coconut farm is down below. There are open-world elements to Nuts & Bolts, as there are two different ways to collect coconuts. One is to drive the preset vehicle down to the coconut farm, vacuum up enough coconuts without weighing down the vehicle, and deliver them to the drop point. Or, as I witnessed, you can strap a helicopter propeller to the vehicle, pick up the drop point with a deployable sticky ball, and take the drop point down the hill to suck up all the coconuts. The later approach cuts out the middle man, but does require advanced piloting skills.

In the World of Sports arena (more on game worlds in a minute), one task pits Banjo atop a massive ramp to launch a vehicle as far as possible. Again, there are almost limitless vehicle types that can exceed in a task such as this. The obvious approach would be to build a car with wings, gliding to victory. Even better, I saw a glider with a deployable cage that continued to roll and build further distance.

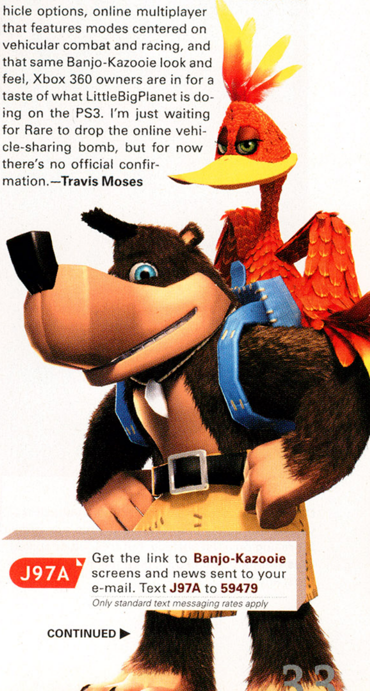
A World within a World

Like previous Banjo games, there is a central hub world where Banjo enters murals to visit different levels, or "game worlds" as Rare is calling them. This central hub is called Showdown Town in Nuts & Bolts, and it is the largest world Rare has ever built. Here you discover game globes that unlock new game worlds. The difference between Showdown Town and the different game worlds is visual. Everything in these game worlds is fabricated, from the stitched ground Banjo stands on to the sky. For example, a game world called Nutty Acres is incased by giant LCD screens that project the sky, and clouds hang from a giant mobile. It's graphically impressive and distinguishes these worlds as something completely different from Showdown Town.

In a world like Nutty Acres, you must complete multiple tasks to earn a Jiggy, which is then transferred to the real world, Showdown Town. In previous Banjo games that was it. You earned your Jiggy, and you were done. But now you have to transport your Jiggy through Showdown Town to a secure location while dodging cops that will bump your Jiggy loose and snatch the goods.

Banjo-Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts is a surprise indeed, but a pleasant one at that. Banjo fans will love the game for its returning characters and witty humor, but I'm concerned the game banks too heavily upon creative, user-generated vehicles. I'm curious to see how many gamers latch on to the concept because it takes a good amount of time and patience. Others who have seen the game expressed concern that Banjo and Kazooie's attacks have been reduced to a simpler move set which just isn't Banjo-Kazooie.

That said, Banjo-Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts is a refreshing ride on a road riddled with cash-in sequels. And you'll only find this creative jewel on the Xbox 360 this November. With limitless vehicle options, online multiplayer that features modes centered on vehicular combat and racing, and that same Banjo-Kazooie look and feel, Xbox 360 owners are in for a taste of what LittleBigPlanet is doing on the PS3. I'm just waiting for Rare to drop the online vehicle-sharing bomb, but for now there's no official confirmation.—**Travis Moses**



J97A Get the link to **Banjo-Kazooie** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text **J97A** to **59479**
Only standard text messaging rates apply

CONTINUED ▶

BANJO MECHANICS

SO YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW TO CREATE AN AWESOME VEHICLE THAT DRIVES, FLIES, AND SWIMS. WELL, LET GOOD OL' BANJO SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE. FIRST YOU'LL NEED...

PROPELLER

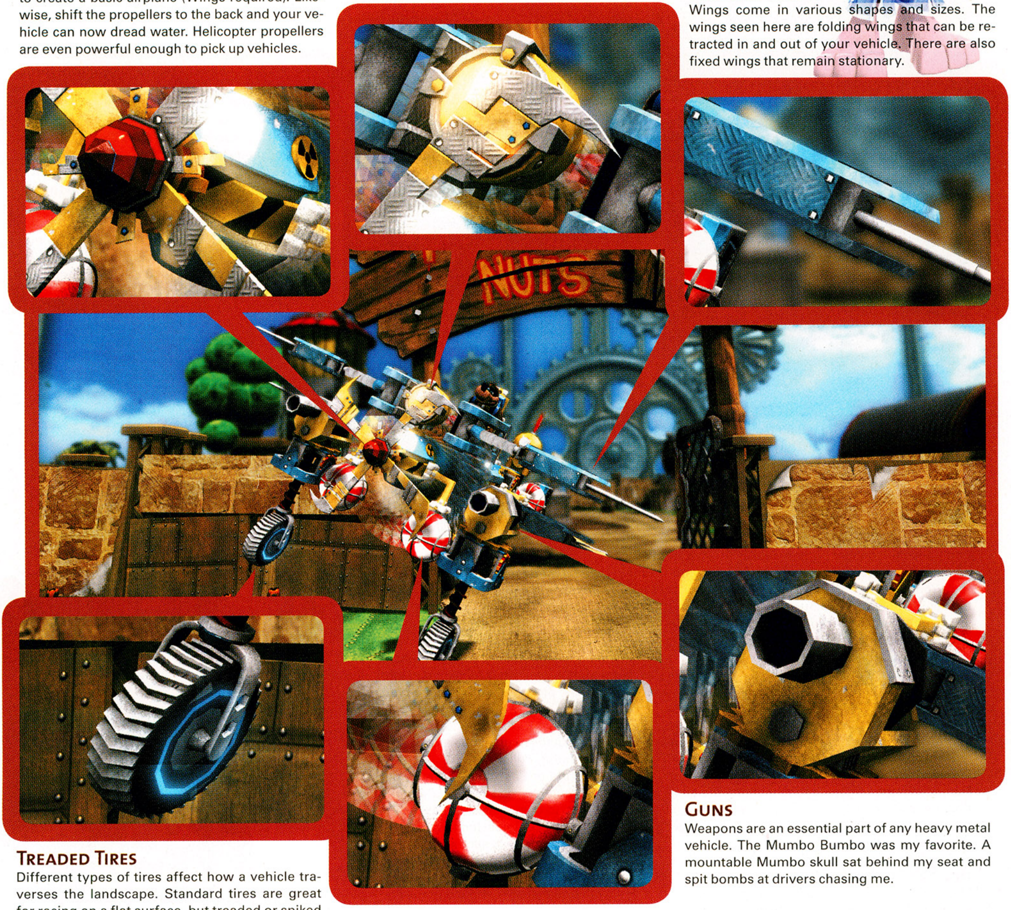
Propellers have a wide variety of uses on a vehicle. Install propellers on the front of your vehicle to create a basic airplane (Wings required). Likewise, shift the propellers to the back and your vehicle can now dread water. Helicopter propellers are even powerful enough to pick up vehicles.

SPOTLIGHT

It's a spotlight. It makes the night brighter and helps you see in the dark.

FOLDING WINGS

Wings come in various shapes and sizes. The wings seen here are folding wings that can be retracted in and out of your vehicle. There are also fixed wings that remain stationary.



TREADED TIRES

Different types of tires affect how a vehicle traverses the landscape. Standard tires are great for racing on a flat surface, but treaded or spiked tires will help you climb steep inclines. Monster tires, anyone?

FLOATIES

Unless you're intension is to sink, then your boat-vehicle is going to need some sort of floatation device.

GUNS

Weapons are an essential part of any heavy metal vehicle. The Mumbo Bumbo was my favorite. A mountable Mumbo skull sat behind my seat and spit bombs at drivers chasing me.

Deca
SPORTS™
10 COMPLETE SPORTING EVENTS
AVAILABLE NOW!
adidas
HUDSON

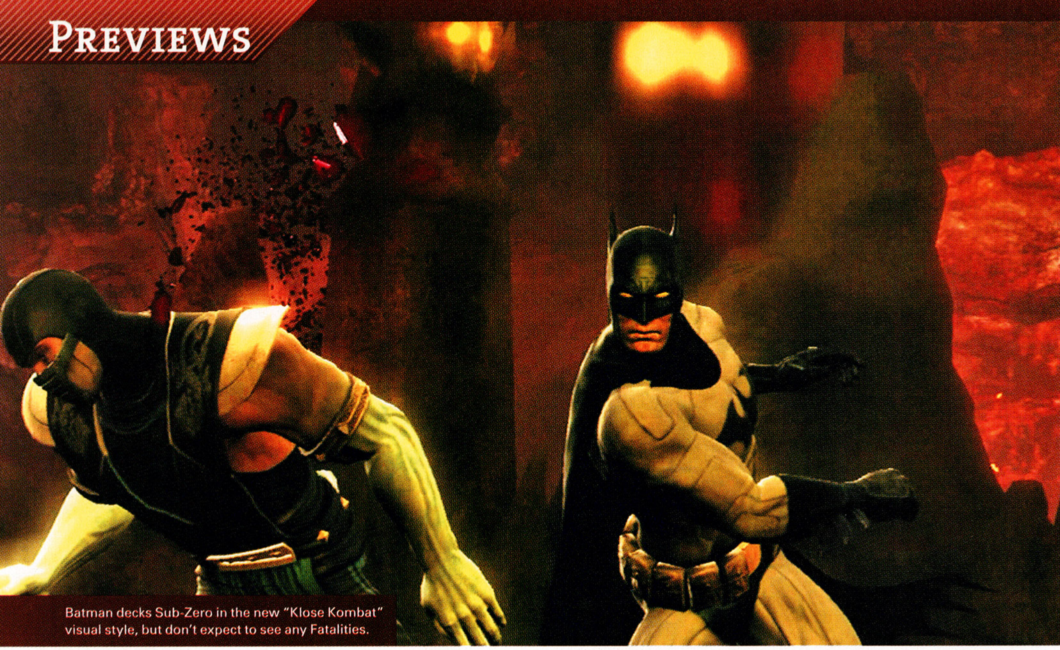
2-4 PERSON MULTIPLAYER ACTION

EVERYONE
E
Visit www.esrb.org for more ratings information.
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Wii™

HUDSON
www.decasports.com

© 2008 HUDSON SOFT The trademark of "Deca Sports" is registered by HUDSON SOFT CO., LTD. All Rights Reserved. adidas, the 3-Stripes trade mark and the 3-Bars logo are registered trade marks of the adidas Group, used with permission. Teamgeist is a trade mark of the adidas Group, used with permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2007 Nintendo. The rating icon is a registered trade mark of the Entertainment Software Association. Published by Hudson Entertainment, Inc.



Batman decks Sub-Zero in the new "Klose Kombat" visual style, but don't expect to see any Fatalities.

MORTAL KOMBAT VS. DC UNIVERSE

Mortal Kombat goes all graphic novel with Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe.

PS3 **Xbox 360**

■ Developer and Publisher: Midway ■ Release Date: Fall 2008

In a surprise move, Midway has announced that Mortal Kombat 8 will actually be a spin-off game entitled "Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe." It will feature Mortal Kombat heroes and villains tackling DC Comics superheroes.

ROUND 8: FIGHT!

Confirmed characters so far: ninjas Scorpion and Sub-Zero represent the Mortal Kombat side, while Batman and (a not-yet-seen) Superman round out the DC Comics side. Other characters are sure to be announced (Midway says, "other iconic and powerful DC Super Heroes" are coming soon), as MK vs. DC is scheduled to hit the PS3 and Xbox 360 this fall.

In talks with the press, Midway has repeatedly confirmed that Sub-Zero will not be ripping out Superman's spine in MK vs. DC. But gorehounds needn't give up all hope, as Midway is pledging to push the Teen envelope as far as possible: that means decent blood spatters and bone-crunching special moves. Midway representatives also suggested that the camera would zoom in close to highlight particularly agonizing blows, à la Fight Night Round 3. There will also be some sort of "finishing moves," but these will not be as violent as the Fatalities found in prior MK games.

KILLER KOMBAT

Though the game won't be a gorefest, its dark new look is likely to attract lots of attention. Harnessing the power of Unreal Engine 3, MK vs. DC looks striking: character models appear to be highly detailed, with expressive animations and ornate costumes. MK vs. DC also deviates from recent Mortal Kombat games to show a darker, bleaker vision, with the MK characters boasting darker colors and fewer of the flamboyant outfits found in recent MK games. The camera also stays much closer to the action, a feature Midway calls "Klose Kombat." Fighters can also smash each other through walls into other locations while wrestling and striking in mid-air, a feature the game is calling "Freefall Kombat." In Freefall Kombat, the goal is to stay in the dominant position against your opponent via punches and kicks, and then ride him into the ground. "Online" is hinted at on Noob.com, a blog by one of the developers of Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe, which leads us to believe the game will have online multiplayer.

To call the announcement of Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe "surprising" would be something of an understatement. The move has already been decried by some ardent MK veterans, and there's no doubt that the announcement is causing fierce debate in both the MK and DC Comics circles.

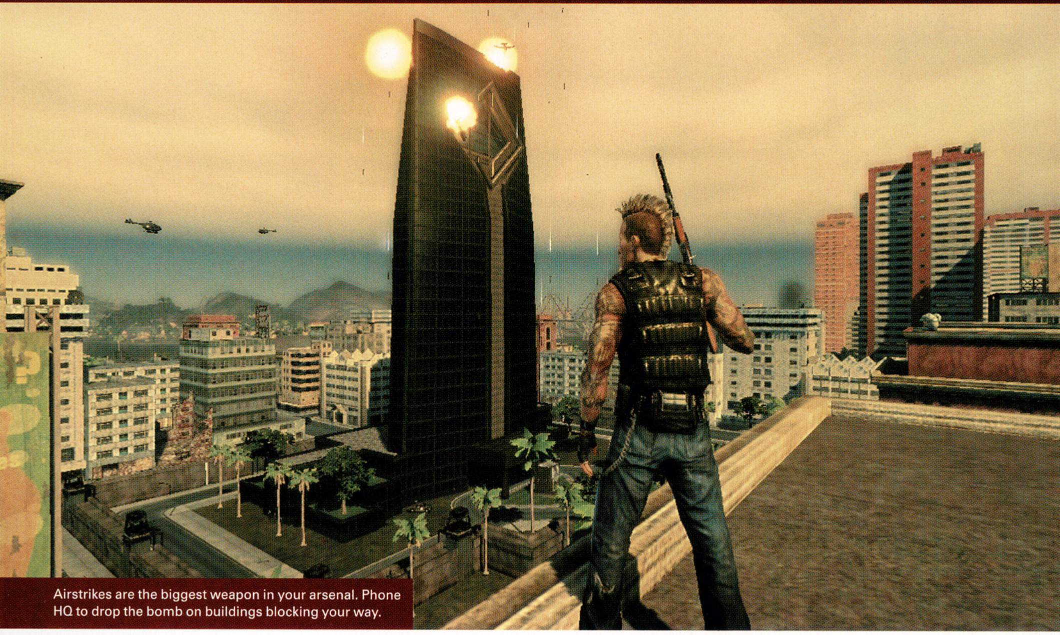
But Midway's got good reason to shake up the formula. Recent Mortal Kombat games, were decent sellers but not particularly popular by the series' standards. Bringing in DC Comics characters, much like Soulcalibur IV's Yoda and Darth Vader guest roles, is a way to help expand the reach of the storied series.—**Sid Shuman**

CONFIRMED CHARACTERS

- Sub-Zero: Confirmed, appears in trailer. Don't expect any spine-pulling shenanigans, though, because MK vs. DC is aiming for a Teen rating.
- Scorpion: The ninja specter returns. Theoretically, he should bare a close resemblance to Sub-Zero. Scorpion yanks in enemies with a roped throwing spear.
- Batman: The trailer shows him battling Sub-Zero on the ground and in mid-air. No word on Batarangs or explosives, but knowing MK's larger-than-life style, we're betting on 'em.
- Superman: Confirmed, but a mystery. One question: wouldn't a single punch from Superman technically be a Fatality?

B79C Get the link to **MK vs. DC Universe** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text **B79C** to **59479**

Only standard text messaging rates apply



Airstrikes are the biggest weapon in your arsenal. Phone HQ to drop the bomb on buildings blocking your way.

MERCENARIES 2: WORLD IN FLAMES

It's time for payback. Mercs 2 lights up the open-world genre with over-the-top action.

PS3 **Xbox 360** **PS2** **PC**

■ Developer: Pandemic Studios ■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Release Date: August

THE EXPLOSIONS ARE BIGGER this time around, everything can be destroyed, and a new co-op mode has been confirmed. Mercs 2 is a third-person action game where the player controls a misfit band of mercenaries in a Grand Theft Auto IV type of sandbox world. I recently witnessed all this and more in a behind-the-scenes look at Mercenaries 2: World in Flames.

TRES TEMAS

Pandemic is a developer well versed in open-world games, so it's no surprise Mercs 2 is shaping up to be their best title yet. For Mercs 2, Pandemic is raising the bar with three themes that make up the core gameplay.

The first theme is presented as a question: "Can I?" To which the answer is, "Yes, you can." You can reach any visible location, steal over 130 different vehicles, and even create your own private military. The second is payback, mercenary style. That means if you hit me with a bullet, I'm going to fire a rocket at your face. If you jack my car, I'm going to steal your helicopter. The third and final theme is over-the-top: Over-the-top action, missions, and characters.

TRULY A WORLD IN FLAMES

The game takes place in Venezuela, a tropical country on the northern coast of South America. But things aren't all cigars and martinis in this tropical paradise. After a tyrannical drug lord rises to power in Venezuela, the power-hungry dictator sparks a war for oil as numerous invading factions fight for the precious resource. These fighting factions include the Universal Petroleum Corp., Rasta Pirates, and the Allied Nations. These are the factions you will be working for, and as a mercenary, your only alliance is to the highest bidder.

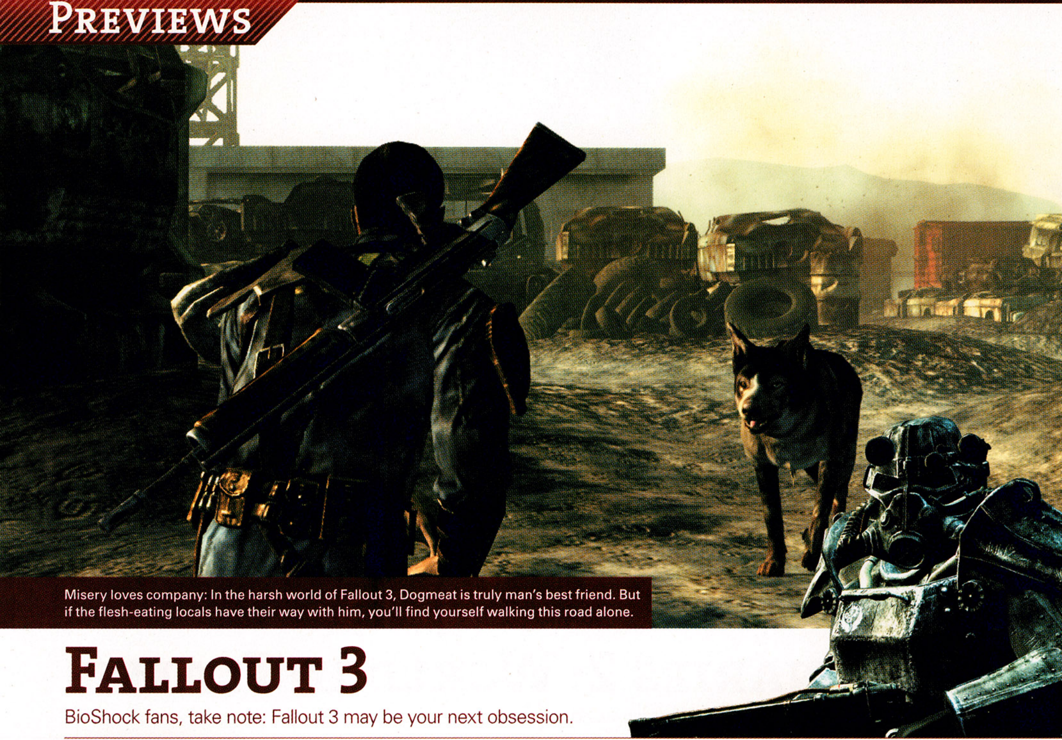
Three of the four playable mercenaries are from the first game—Jennifer Mui, Mattias Nilsson, and Chris Jacobs. Mercs 2 plays a lot like Grand Theft Auto IV and Just Cause, so fans of either game should feel comfortable with the controls. Between missions, you run around shooting things and stealing cars, motorcycles, boats, tanks and helicopters. There's even a grappling hook that can hoist you up to unsuspecting helicopters. But one thing Mercs 2 does have that other open-world sandbox games don't is complete destruction. Rocks shatter, trees spark up in flames, and buildings crumble under heavy fire. It's one of the first games where you'll tear threw a small town and can honestly look back and say, "I did all that?!" The flaming trees are especially a sight to see, one of our favorites graphical touches.

The weapon selection includes an AK-47 assault rifle, shotgun, SMG, grenade launcher and much more. I played the Xbox 360 version where the Left Trigger takes you into over-the-shoulder view for precision aiming, and the Right Trigger fires. The really impressive weapons, however, are the ones you have to call in to HQ for. For example, Mercs 2 features an overkill of 18 different airstrikes—too much? Not for a mercenary.

TAKE COVER, OR NOT

There is no cover system in Mercs 2, which I think the combat could benefit from, and the objects to take cover behind are pretty sparse. As a fan of open-world games, I was pleased with the level of mayhem, but I'm concerned Mercs 2 is falling victim to the quantity vs. quality conundrum. It's a minor problem, but I would cut the vehicle count in half, maybe even reduce the map size a bit, and implement a simple cover system. I found myself getting blasted to bits, struggling to take cover behind a rock or tree.

Mercenaries 2: World in Flames is scheduled to release on August 31st for the PS3, Xbox 360, PS2, and PC. I was told the PS2 version will be almost the same game with minor cuts taken from the level of destruction and graphical quality. **—Tenacious Moses**



Misery loves company: In the harsh world of Fallout 3, Dogmeat is truly man's best friend. But if the flesh-eating locals have their way with him, you'll find yourself walking this road alone.

FALLOUT 3

BioShock fans, take note: Fallout 3 may be your next obsession.

PS3 **Xbox 360** **PC**

■ Developer and Publisher: Bethesda Softworks ■ Release Date: Fall 2008

When last we checked in on the dreary, bomb-blasted landscape of Fallout 3, we knew that this post-apocalyptic role-playing game was shaping up to be something special. Now that we've seen a new and improved version, we think Fallout 3 may be a surprise critical hit and top-seller...in other words, the BioShock of 2008. Here's why.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

Developed by the same minds behind hit role-playing game The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion, Fallout 3 is an action-RPG that pits players against the mutant denizens of a post-nuke world. Your character is literally born into this apocalypse, having spent his entire life cooped up in an underground bomb shelter called a "Vault." Upon starting the game, you'll experience the live birth of your character from the eyes of a newborn. You'll learn to walk, look around, and pick up small objects all from the perspective of a toddler. Other sequences teach you to interact with playmates and pick your skill specialties, which will become important when you grow up and venture outside of the safety of the Vault. This birth-to-adulthood segment is a clever, intuitive way to introduce the control system—it's much more immersive and interesting than a simple no-frills tutorial mode, and helps ground you in the universe of Fallout 3.

Once you sprout into adulthood, it's time to begin your adventuring phase. Much like real life, the mysteries quickly begin to stack up. Where did your father disappear to? What's happening outside of the Vault? What's the secret behind the Vault's enigmatic Overseer? You'll learn the answers to those questions and more as you take your first tentative steps into the nuke-shattered streets of Washington, D.C.

LEARNING TO LOVE THE BOMB

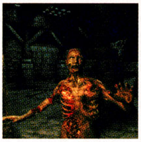
As in Oblivion, the world of Fallout 3 is an open book: you can theoretically travel almost anywhere, at any time, without waiting for new areas to be "unlocked." In a similar touch, many of the battles and events are unscripted and random. For instance, you'll meet a friendly companion called "Dogmeat" early in the game, but the time and place of that meeting depends on chance. Dogmeat is a garden-variety canine, but he's got some extraordinary abilities. In addition to helping distract and damage enemies, Dogmeat will sniff out and fetch hidden weapons, food, or items if you're ever in a pinch. Dogmeat isn't invincible, though, and if he screws the pooch by dying in combat, you'll face a long, lonely road to the end of the game because there's no way to resurrect him.

We can't help but notice that Fallout 3 looks better and better each time we see it. The latest version boasts improved graphics, which were so detailed you could practically smell the ash in the air as you walked through the decaying streets of D.C. The attention to detail is superb: while prowling through mutant-infested ruins, we trotted past look-alikes of famous structures such as the Washington Monument and the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

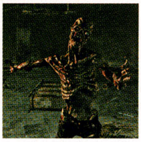
The meat-and-potatoes combat looks impressive, too, with mini guns and rocket launchers that will make shooter veterans sit up and take notice. Yet despite the slick first-person combat, Fallout 3 is first and foremost a role-playing game. Upgrading your equipment and choosing the best skills are as important as having a speedy trigger finger. Judging by the success of Oblivion, we wouldn't have it any other way.
—Sid Shuman

KISSIN' COUSINS

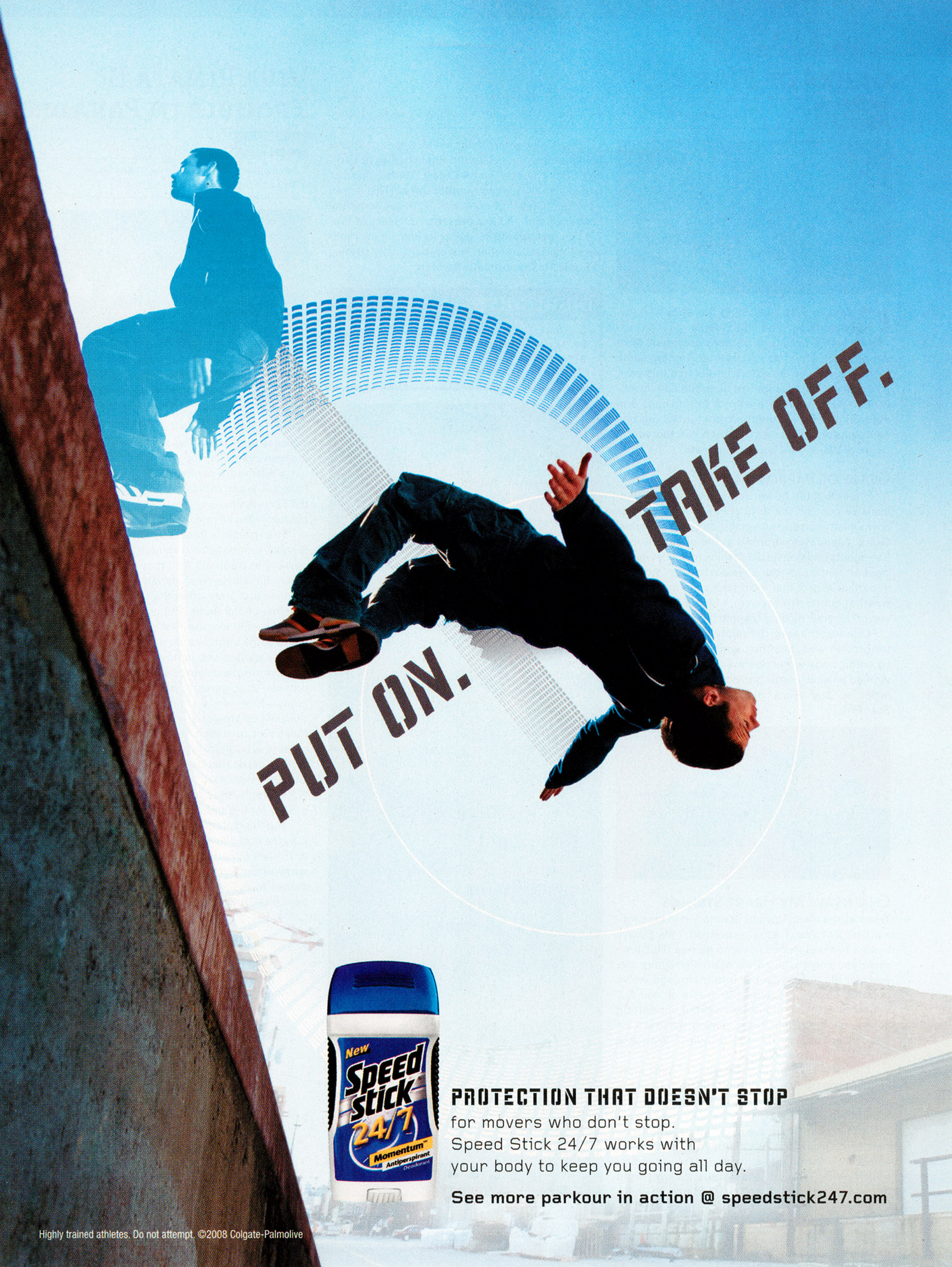
Fallout 3 and Oblivion, being developed by the same studio, share more than a few similarities in gameplay and style. Here's one that instantly caught our eye—notice any similarities?



A zombie in The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion...



...and a feral ghoul in Fallout 3.


PUT ON.
TAKE OFF.
New
Speed Stick
24/7
Momentum
Antiperspirant
Deodorant

PROTECTION THAT DOESN'T STOP
for movers who don't stop.
Speed Stick 24/7 works with
your body to keep you going all day.

See more parkour in action @ speedstick247.com

Highly trained athletes. Do not attempt. ©2008 Colgate-Palmolive

GEARS OF WAR 2

Xbox 360

■ Developer: Epic Games ■ Publisher: Microsoft ■ Release Date: November

GEARS OF WAR 2

GEARS OF WAR 2 is hitting the Xbox 360 this November, and *GamePro*'s got an exclusive update from Epic president Mike Capps—storyline details revealed! Gaming came to the New York Comic Con in full force this year, whereas previous years had been the comic convention norm with rare comics in polybags and overweight men in superhero costumes. But one name was on everyone's mind at NYCC this year—Gears of War 2. And we got the deets.

GEARS OF IMPROVEMENT

After finishing the PC version and the 360's downloadable content, the folks at Epic began to break down what worked and what didn't in the original Gears. Capps was surprised at the popularity of a last-minute addition he didn't think much of when it was first conceived—the chainsaw bayonet. Another important aspect that went under the microscope was the popular cover system, which led to the addition of dynamic moving cover in the sequel.

One area the team definitely knew was primed for growth was the story, which will be penned by comic book writer Joshua Ortega. Ortega has worked on such comic book characters and properties as *Star Wars*, *Batman*, *Spider-Man*, and *Star Trek*.

CHAINSAW MY HEART STRINGS

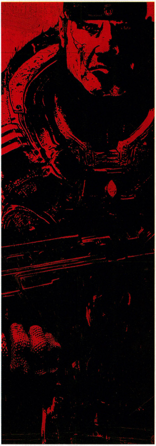
When asked about the lack of emotion in the original Gears of War, Capps responded, "It's always been a problem for us in video games. This time since you know who all the main characters are, you can dig a little deeper into them, and we've built the story in advance [for Gears of War 2]." Capps even joked about the death of supporting actors, such as Cole Train, saying that he'll be there "Until at least halfway through." Who else may die in Gears of War 2?

Capps is taking all-new Gears of War intellectual properties very seriously—from the novels to the comic books to the game. They all piece together a different part of the universe. Capps expressed that Gears 2 will explain a little more details regarding the Pendulum Wars, but "that's a space we're going to explore a bit with the first novel." With Gears 2, Capps wants "to jump right into saving humanity," and cut the bullcrap.

Especially when it comes to Gears of War 2 being a mere set up for the final chapter of a trilogy. "That sucks," says Capps, "when number two is just a bridge to number three. [This is] not a bridge." On a final note, we had to ask about the Locust Queen and her presence in Gears of War 2. Let's just say we're going to learn a lot more about the Queen when November finally comes. **—Travis Moses and Dave Rudden**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lead designer Cliff Bleszinski says Gears 2 is going to be "bigger, better, and far more badass than the first game in every way. You had better bring a bring a bucket, because it's going to be a lot bloodier."



VIVA PIÑATA II: TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Xbox 360

■ Developer: Rare ■ Publisher: Microsoft
■ Release Date: September

VIVA PIÑATA RETURNS in another not-so-new garden-creating, Piñata-mating adventure. Now if that doesn't sound like an appealing game then I don't know what's wrong with you. Because a garden in Viva Piñata is more fun to create than a SimCity, and when Piñatas mate you get extra adventure candy. Viva Piñata II: Trouble in Paradise is the official sequel to Viva Piñata, not the Party Animals spin-off. That's been put out to pasture—like all rejected Piñatas.

The Trouble in Paradise moniker presents Viva Piñata II as more story oriented, like "Oh crap, paradise is in trouble!" And that's true to a degree. Since the television show, Viva Piñata has picked up an actual plot—other than making a garden to lure innocent Piñatas. But don't be fooled, Viva II plays exactly like the first game, and Rare even made some improvements.

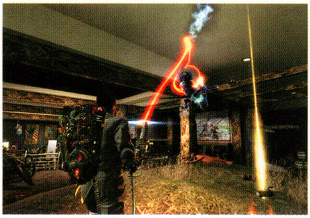
The garden size is now expandable, and you can even browse outside your garden. How far outside your garden, you ask? To different regions of the world actually. In Viva II, there are two different regions—desert and snow—that you must visit to collect rare and exotic Piñatas. Another new addition is the introduction of FREE collectible cards that can be scanned with the Xbox Live Vision camera to unlock things in the game. For example, the cards unlock rare Piñatas, more money for the shop, or even change the weather.

The thing about Viva Piñata is that if you didn't play the first game then have got to try Viva Piñata II: Trouble in Paradise. It's a fun game for all ages and you can even play with your brother or sister thanks to the new two-player, drop-in/out co-op feature. **—Travis Moses**

GHOSTBUSTERS: THE VIDEO GAME

PS3 **Xbox 360** **PC**

■ Developer: Terminal Reality ■ Publisher: Sierra Entertainment ■ Release Date: October

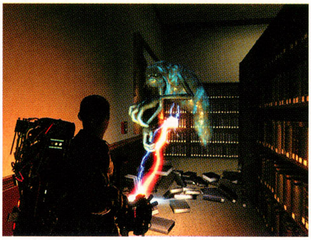


There are few retro movie franchises that are as beloved and iconic as *Ghostbusters*. For gamers of a certain generation, *Ghostbusters* still stands as a seminal geek film: like the original *Star Wars* and *Back to the Future*, it's just one of those movies that you can't help but love. This helps explain why, when rumblings of a new-gen Ghostbusters game first leaked onto the Internet, gamers went wild.

YOU KNOW WHO TO CALL

I didn't get much in the way of hard details out of my short demo with the Xbox 360 version of the game. They didn't reveal any of the story elements, though I did learn that you play as a new recruit to the Ghostbusters team. Nor did they discuss things like the number of levels and included modes. But what they did do was show off the game's insane physics engine.

Dubbed the Velocity Engine, this piece of custom tech can produce some ridiculous onscreen effects. The development team (Terminal Reality) conjured up an alley way and filled it with bystanders, all of whom had their own pathfinding routines—at one point, there were over a thousand discrete characters on the screen. They then took us into the public library that provided the setting for the ghostly intro sequence from the first movie. Inside, books and tables and chairs realistically flew apart as they were hit by proton-beam fire, providing an awesome display of physics and carnage.



PUFT DADDY

The rest of the demo was spent sampling the tasty ghost-busting gameplay. I watched as the main character ran alongside members of the Ghostbusters team, battling ghosts and navigating treacherous terrain as they headed towards a rooftop confrontation with, who else, the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man. It was classic Ghostbusting action as the team fired their proton-packs, trapped ghosts in the shimmering beams then tossed out traps to contain them. The game's visuals, powered by the Infernal Engine, were gorgeous and they really captured the look of the movie; at one point, they showed off the Ecto-1 car and the level of detail was pretty freaking sweet.

The demo ended shortly after the team ran into Stay Puft and fired off a few shots but my brief time with the game got me excited to strap on a proton-pack of my own. Of course, there was one thing that gave me pause—the battles against the minor ghosts and ghouls seemed a little tedious. Considering how long it took to trap a ghost and further considering the fact that there are a lot of them to contend with, I could see how it might get a little tiresome. But I'm hoping that the developers keep things moving along and that the movie's trademark humor comes shining through. As someone who loved the first two movies, I can't wait to get my hands on the game. **—Tae K. Kim**

FINAL FANTASY IV

DS

■ Developer: Matrix Software ■ Publisher: Square Enix ■ Release Date: July

Square Enix is notorious for remaking its past RPG titles as gaming technology moves forward. Since 1991, Final Fantasy IV alone has been remade six times for five different systems. Its latest reincarnation on the Nintendo DS, however, may be the greatest classic remake in Final Fantasy's long history.

A WHOLE NEW FANTASY

Anyone who hasn't played Final Fantasy IV before is in for a real treat. This popular role-playing game puts you in the shoes of several unique characters—knights, mages, and more—fighting armies of strange and powerful monsters in a beautiful 3D environment. Built from the ground up for the DS, FFIV can be easily played on short trips as well as long sit-downs. It doesn't hurt that the game looks really good, too.

The famous story of FFIV revolves around the Kingdom of Baron and its plot to overthrow neighboring countries by stealing their magical crystals. Cecil, a Dark Knight in service to Baron, battles with feelings of guilt as he and his best friend Kain, a powerful Dragoon, continue their path of bloodshed out of loyalty to their home. Before long, Cecil and Kain turn against their kingdom to protect the innocent, embarking on a long and treacherous journey.

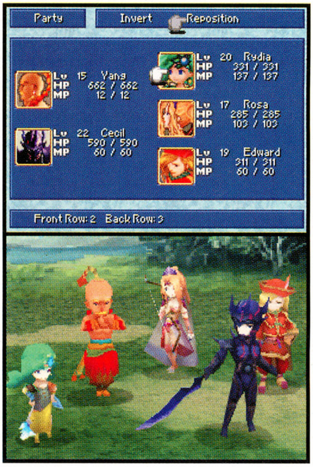
NEW BATTLES, NEW CHANGES

Final Fantasy IV is famous for more than its story—it was the first FF title to feature the Active Time Battle system, which put the pressure on players by allowing monsters to attack in real time. It made the original SNES game not only more exciting than its three predecessors, but even more difficult.

Final Fantasy IV's battle system has also been revamped in two key areas: character abilities and menu customization. With FFIV's new Augment System, characters can be assigned certain useful abilities (like Auto-Potion and Counter) that are discovered throughout the game. With menu customization, choosing your actions in-battle seems easier than ever. Instead of wading through a long list to find your buried Phoenix Downs, just put them on the main combat menu.

THIS CRYSTAL STILL SHINES

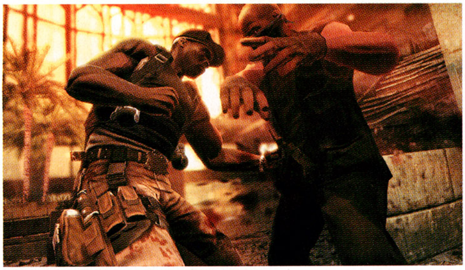
Matrix Software, the team behind FFIII's DS remake, has done a masterful job of recreating FFIV for the DS. Despite the new coat of 3D paint, the game still looks as faithfully retro as its SNES counterpart, and the new additions already have us raving. We can't wait for the fantasy to return this summer—our DS pens are poised and ready.—**McKinley Noble**



50 CENT: BLOOD ON THE SAND

PS3 **Xbox 360**

■ Developer: Swordfish Studios ■ Publisher: Sierra ■ Release Date: Fall 2008



I couldn't help but laugh when the backstory to the new 50 Cent game, Blood on the Sand, was explained to me. It sounded so ridiculously hokey and contrived that I couldn't believe they were actually making a game out of it. But then I saw the game in action and it quickly became obvious that developers Swordfish Studios and 50 Cent may just have the last laugh.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

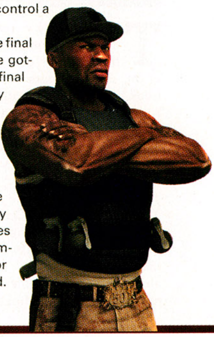
First, let me explain that hokey backstory that nearly had me laughing out loud: 50 Cent and his fellow G-Unit members are contracted to do a tour somewhere in the Middle East. They show up and do their thing, or thang as the case may be, but there's just one problem: the concert promoter can't come up with the money to pay them. Of course, 50 Cent's not about to let that sit, so they threaten and harass the jackass promoter until he caves and offers them a jewel-encrusted skull as payment.

Now, here's where the plot thickens—the G-Unit crew is ambushed as they're about to leave the country with their newfound treasure and 50 Cent heads into battle to get back what's rightfully his, and unravel the mystery behind the valuable skull.

WAY OF THE GUN

Like I said, the narrative is not the game's strong suit. But then you see the game in motion and something strange happens: it all starts to make sense. That's because the developers were actively going for an over-the-top, balls-to-the-walls type of game. The game is a non-stop bulletfest that reminds me of Stranglehold: 50 Cent and his G-Unit cronies are constantly running from one location to another, spitting out equal amounts of bullets and trash talk.

It's a fast, frenetic looking game that plays out like a gritty action movie. Built on Unreal Engine 3 tech, the game also looks pretty impressive. The character models were sharp, the level designs showed a lot of polish and the gun-based action was buttery smooth. I also appreciated the intuitive cover system and the little touches like timed bounties that pop up from time to time—kill X number of bad guys in X amount of time and you get a bonus—as well as the co-op modes—a friend can jump in and control a G-Unit member.



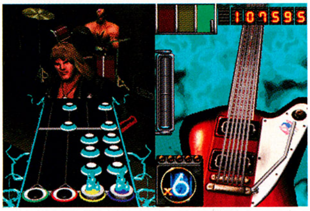
I am going to reserve final judgment until after I've gotten a chance to try the final game but I've learned my lesson: it's not smart to underestimate 50 Cent or any game that stars him, for that matter. I'll be very interested to see if Blood on the Sand's over-the-top story and gameplay translates into a worthwhile gaming experience but for now, color me intrigued. **—Tae K. Kim**

GUITAR HERO: ON TOUR

DS

■ Developer: Vicarious Visions ■ Publisher: Activision ■ Release Date: June

When I first heard that a Guitar Hero title for the DS was in development, I immediately expected the worst. But after getting my hands on the final product, I'm tremendously happy to report that my initial fears were completely unfounded: what Vicarious Visions and Activision have done with On Tour is nothing short of a miracle.



BELIEVE IN MIRACLES

Instead of just trying to make mini-Guitar Hero on the DS, developers Vicarious Visions put a lot of thought into On Tour. They finally hit upon an elegant solution that just plain works: On Tour uses a four button peripheral that plugs into the GBA slot of the DS Lite (an adapter allows you to use it with original DS models). You hold the DS in book mode and cradle the handheld in your hand, with your fingers resting on the buttons. You strum on the touchscreen using a special guitar pick shaped stylus; the non-touchscreen displays the stage as well as the familiar moving fretboard.

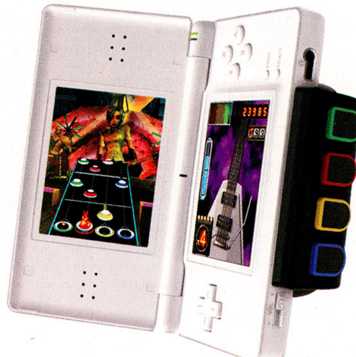
It may sound a little odd on paper but trust me—it works and it works well. The unit felt intuitive and immediately familiar. I experienced a little bit of hand cramping during faster sequences but it felt right.

I WANNA ROCK

Gameplay wise, the game is still the same old Guitar Hero you know and love: colored notes stream down a moving fretboard and you press the correct buttons and "strum" to the beat. Using the touchscreen to strum the notes proved to be as easy as using the strum bar on a full sized GH controller; you can also activate star power by yelling into the mike, which was a nice touch. Surprisingly, the audio is pretty spectacular, especially considering that it's coming out of the DS. The game features about 25 tracks (mostly new songs with some favorites from GHIII thrown in). Consider also that most of the songs are master track recordings as well, which adds a nice layer of authenticity.

I also got to play a multiplayer mode that pitted me against fellow editor Dave Rudden over local Wi-Fi; we picked a song and battled against each other for sonic supremacy. Much like the boss battles and battle mode in GHIII, power-ups would randomly show up; these let me increase the speed of my opponent's notes, up the difficulty of his songs and pull other devious tricks to mess him up.

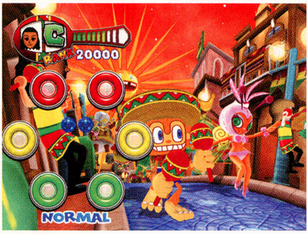
I will, of course, reserve judgment until I've had a chance to put the final version through its paces but I walked away from my limited playtime with On Tour impressed. Vicarious Visions really put a lot of thought into the game and it definitely shows. Guitar Hero fanatics and DS owners alike should keep a close eye on this one. **—Tae K. Kim**



SAMBA DE AMIGO

Wii

■ Developer: Gearbox Software
■ Publisher: Sega ■ Release Date: Summer 2008



Bringing the cult rhythm game hit Samba de Amigo to the Wii is like drinking water when you're thirsty or washing your hands after using the bathroom—it just makes sense. The Wii Remote's unique motion sensing capabilities is a perfect fit for the game's maraca-based gameplay and eliminates the biggest hurdle that kept the Dreamcast version of Samba from achieving mass success—the need for specialized controllers.

The Wii version lets you use either two Wii Remotes or a Wii Remote paired with a Nunchuk, which you shake to the beat of the included songs (final tracks haven't been announced yet). You shake your virtual maracas in three ways—high, middle, and low—and either shake them in unison or singularly. There are also special pose moves where you have to hold the maracas in specific ways, as well as "hustle" moves where you have to shake a maraca back and forth.

It may sound complicated, but much like every other good rhythm game worth its salt, it's instantly accessible and intuitive. The graphical style retains its vibrant, colorful charm and the songs, at least the ones I heard, had a catchy bounce to them. It remains to be seen whether or not Samba de Amigo on the Wii will catch the interest of gamers the way Guitar Hero and Rock Band did, but I'm convinced that the game has the potential to be yet another quirky and fun addition to the Wii's already impressive library.

—Tae K. Kim

SONIC CHRONICLES: THE DARK BROTHERHOOD

DS

■ Developer: BioWare
■ Publisher: Sega ■ Release Date: Fall 2008

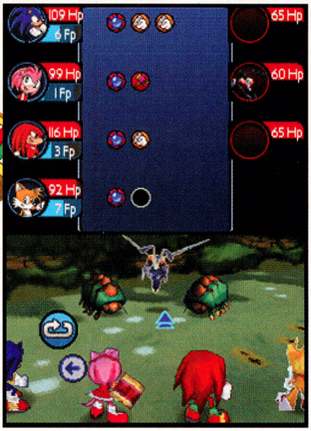
When a series in dire need of a comeback meets a can't-miss developer, expectations are bound to be sky-high. We got to try out the beginning of the BioWare-helmed RPG featuring the once-glorious gaming icon Sonic the Hedgehog, and while it's not quite a portable Mass Effect, it is an interesting new direction for the stale speedster.

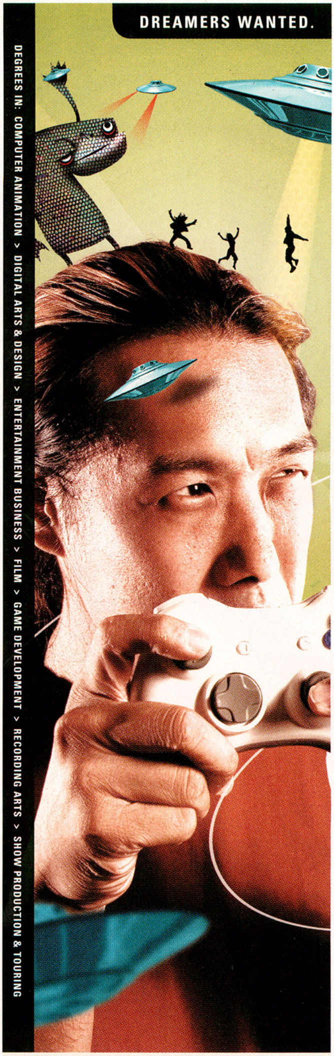
It's almost immediately noticeable that there's a capable hand writing Sonic's latest saga. While the blue bomber's last few platformers featured forgettable story lines, what little we saw of Sonic Chronicle's narrative was enjoyable. The opening featured Sonic's return to his hometown, which was under attack by a mysterious robot race.

As opposed to BioWare's previous work, which featured battles that blurred the line between RPG and action, Sonic Chronicles takes a more traditional RPG approach to battles. Like Chrono Trigger, the enemies are visible within the environment, and most battles begin only if Sonic touches them, with the exception of a few scripted fights. The battles are standard fare, with Sonic's speed allowing him to attack more often than most, which was a nice touch. We also got to attempt a few combined attacks, which allow for some cool-looking combo moves, including one where Amy uses her mallet to knock a speeding Sonic into enemies.

Sonic Chronicles looks like it could be Sega's answer to the Paper Mario series. It still has some kinks to work out, especially in adapting Sonic's speed to an RPG setting. We had trouble moving him about the environment and avoiding enemies, particularly with the Phantom Hourglass method of "touch where to go" movement. It really didn't feel fast enough for Sonic, but it wasn't slow enough for a traditional RPG. We have confidence an able team like BioWare can pull it all together before release. A mascot's future depends on it.

—Dave Rudden




DREAMERS WANTED.

DEGREES IN: COMPUTER ANIMATION > DIGITAL ARTS & DESIGN > ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS > FILM > GAME DEVELOPMENT > RECORDING ARTS > SHOW PRODUCTION & TOURING

SCHOOL OF GAME DEVELOPMENT

800.226.7625 3300 University Boulevard • Winter Park, FL 32792

Financial aid available to those who qualify • Career development assistance • Accredited School, ACCSCT

ONE OF THE TOP FIVE GAME-DEGREE PROGRAMS IN THE WORLD
— Electronic Gaming Monthly

FULL SAIL
Real World Education

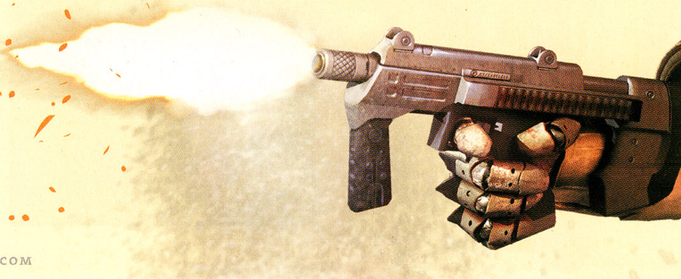
fullsail.com

© 2006 Full Sail Inc. All rights reserved.

HAL

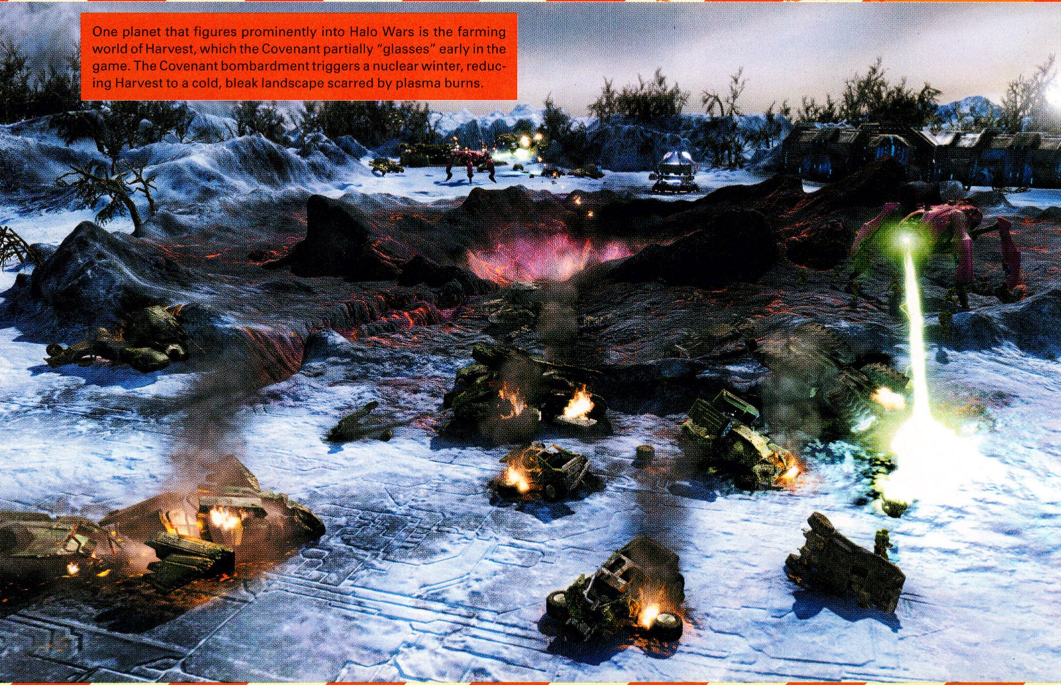
BIGGEST

Halo 3 finished the fight, but the future of Halo lies in its past. **Halo Wars** kicks the storyline back 20 years to chronicle the earliest encounters between humanity and the fanatical Covenant. *GamePro* got the world's first hands-on gameplay with Halo Wars, as well as unprecedented access to its esteemed developer, Ensemble Studios.



O'S

BATTLE



One planet that figures prominently into Halo Wars is the farming world of Harvest, which the Covenant partially "glasses" early in the game. The Covenant bombardment triggers a nuclear winter, reducing Harvest to a cold, bleak landscape scarred by plasma burns.

"If Halo Wars is successful, it won't only be viewed as a great Halo game," Ensemble Studios executive producer Harter Ryan explains. "We're looking for a bigger success—to establish the strategy genre on the Xbox 360. We want to make a beacon for other developers."

Developers could use the help. Real-time strategy (RTS) games have suffered a dismal track record on home consoles over the years, scoring vanishingly few successes amidst countless failures. The problem is elementary. The very elements that make PC games such as Starcraft so addictive–micromanaging resources, juggling multiple battles at once–bog down the console experience to a near standstill.

But that isn't stopping Ensemble Studios, the masterminds behind the trend-setting PC strategy series Age of Empires. With Halo Wars, Ensemble is aiming to pull off the impossible: craft a simple, intuitive, highly playable strategy game based around the strengths—and limitations—of the Xbox 360 controller. And you know what? These console first-timers just might pull it off.

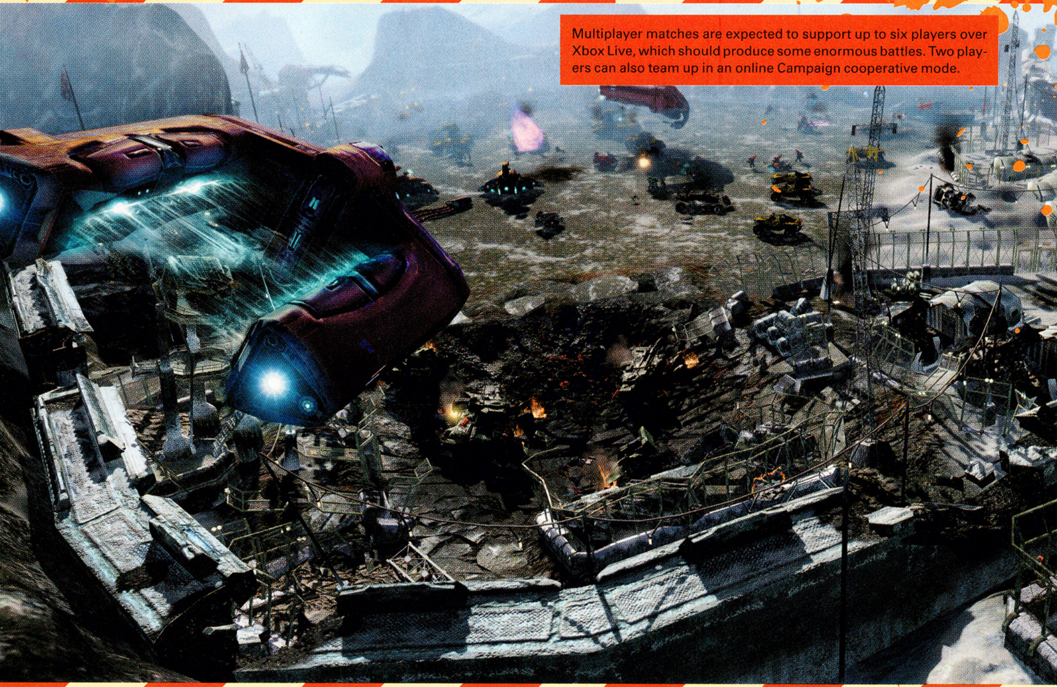
FULL CIRCLE

"Bungie has been quite modest about letting us make Halo Wars," Ensemble Studios producer Chris Rippy says, "because, believe me, those guys are quite capable of making their own Halo RTS game." Other aspirations aside, Halo Wars is already something of an oddity because it's the first Halo game that won't be developed by Bungie Studios, the creators of the Halo series. But Bungie is leaving its mark on Halo Wars in other ways. When Ensemble Studios started work on Halo Wars, Bungie opened up its Halo vault to share rare reference material and storyline secrets from the near-mythical Halo Bible that the Halo creator keeps locked up in its Kirkland, WA offices.

In transforming the Halo universe into a strategy game, Ensemble Studios is ironically bringing the series back to its roots. Before its release as the Xbox first-person shooter loved my millions worldwide, Halo was planned to be a PC strategy game. A series of design tweaks culminated in Halo's eventual rebirth as a white-knuckle console shooter. But Halo's strategy DNA lived on in the series anyway, evident in the game's distinctive vehicles and rock-paper-scissors gameplay philosophy. Ensemble's job is to distill those traits and forge a radically different creation: a fun, easy to play, console-based Halo RTS. It turns out that this is easier said than done.

THE RTS PROBLEM

Reinventing Halo as a strategy game may seem like an easy task—slap a Warthog here, a mob of Marines there, a cursor, and voila!—but the reality of producing Halo Wars has required tremendous effort and thought from the veteran RTS developers at Ensemble Studios. Halo Wars has forced Ensemble's team to re-evaluate its most deeply



Multiplayer matches are expected to support up to six players over Xbox Live, which should produce some enormous battles. Two players can also team up in an online Campaign cooperative mode.

held beliefs about the function and feel of the RTS genre, in the process turning conventional wisdom on its head. The first challenge was the hardest: making a strategy game that feels utterly natural when played on a game controller, a demanding task since the device can't match the fluidity or flexibility of a PC mouse and keyboard.

"We started by converting [PC strategy game] Age of Mythology to work with a controller," executive producer Ryan explains. "We didn't want to worry about the specifics of the game, just the user interface and the feel of the controller." Though Ensemble's prototype took months of hard work from a dedicated team, the proof-of-concept caught the attention of Microsoft, the studio's owner and publisher. "Then," Ryan adds, "we started talking about Halo."

But making the switch from PC game development to console development brings some serious challenges. "Ensemble has had to step away from our own classic definition of an RTS," Ryan explains. PC RTS games rely on their complex interfaces and detailed in-game economies, features that the studio acknowledges just won't work when played on a TV set in the living room. In designing a more visceral combat system and visual communication style for Halo Wars, the experienced PC studio had to move outside of its comfort zone. "These are all new challenges for Ensemble," Ryan acknowledges.

CONTINUED ▶

THE FUTURE OF HALO

From the GamePro Files

The fight might be finished, but the saga is far from over. Halo Wars will be the first game in the franchise to take a different direction, and it joins a slew of other upcoming projects based on different aspects of Bungie Studios' sci-fi universe. First up is the project that we know the most about: Halo Chronicles.

HALO CHRONICLES

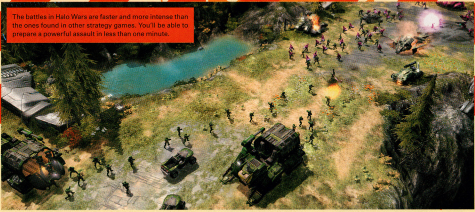
One Halo to rule them all

One ring to rule them all

Director Peter Jackson (The Lord of the Rings, *King Kong*) will helm this upcoming interactive series set within the Halo universe. Tackling this 800-lb. gorilla of a franchise won't be an easy task, but Jackson's unparalleled skill in breathing life into fantasy films gives us high hopes. Jackson is promising episodic content that blurs the line between movie and game, although exactly what he means remains unclear. From a choose-your-own-adventure-style interactive story to a computer-rendered movie with control over the camera angle, speculation and rumor have surrounded the project's nature since Microsoft formally announced it in late 2006. The game's confirmed episodic nature seems well-suited to Xbox Live Arcade downloads, but this remains unconfirmed.

Lately, Microsoft has been on a hiring spree to support Jackson's Wingnut Interactive on the Xbox 360-exclusive Halo Chronicles. According to Microsoft Game Studios, its team "has been hard at work collaborating with Peter Jackson and Bungie on the development of Halo Chronicles" and has been adding staff to keep pace with development.

***GAMEPRO'S* PREDICTION:** With staff still being added, and Halo Wars due in late 2008, Halo Chronicles won't hit the Xbox 360 until 2009...or later.



The battles in Halo Wars are faster and more intense than the ones found in other strategy games. You'll be able to prepare a powerful assault in less than one minute.

The good news is that many of Ensemble's bold design decisions in Halo Wars have re-energized and re-focused the team. One promising example is the simplicity of Halo Wars' economy, which isn't structured around wood or gold or money, but simply an all-encompassing resource called "supplies." With such a simple economy in place, players can focus on the real action: upgrading units, building helpful new structures, and sending legions of troops into battle. "The economy is simple but meaningful," Ensemble designer Dave Pottinger says. "All the big strategy decisions remain, but the game style is more adrenaline-filled."

That speedy new game pace, which lowers the learning curve and better captures the energy of the Halo shooters, is another bold move that Ensemble is particularly proud of. Rather than battles that rage on for 30 minutes or more, Halo Wars encourages faster, more vicious conflicts that can play out in a fraction of the time. It's a play style that suits the Halo world well. "In early versions of the game, it took 10 minutes to prepare to fight," Pottinger explains. "Now we've got that down to about 10 seconds." Starting a match is faster and more engaging, too, as you begin every battle with a lone unarmed Warthog that you can drive around to collect the supply crates that dot the environments. Once you collect a few supply crates, you can start pumping out troops seconds into the match.

GUNS OR BUTTER?

Spend a few minutes browsing the Halopedia (halo.wikia.com) and you'll see that Halo players are an obsessive, detail-oriented bunch. That poses another challenge for Ensemble: how to make a deep strategy experience while remaining faithful to the iconic look and feel of the Halo shooters. "Warthogs, Scorpions...Halo fans have specific expectations about what these are and how they work," Pottinger says. "Our challenge is to live up to those expectations and still make a great RTS game."

That task is easier said than done according to the game's lead art producer, Lance Hoke. The solution? Constant revision. "We use Bungie's original designs as a reference, but Halo Wars is an RTS game, and that visual style won't always work." Case in point: the highly detailed Halo characters—Marines, Spartans, Grunts—look confusingly similar when viewed from the high overhead camera used in Halo Wars. "We sometimes have to exaggerate a character's proportions, or saturate his colors, to make it work in the RTS setting," Hoke says. Though the character designs look a bit different when viewed up-close, from a distance the battles look strikingly faithful to the landmark shooter series. Banshees swoop and dive through the air, Warthogs run down Covenant Grunts, and sticky plasma grenades send UNSC Marines flying like rag dolls. Yup—this is definitely Halo.

In designing Halo Wars, Ensemble has a chance to not only channel the spirit of the earlier Halo games, but also expand on elements of the game's wider universe. Halo Wars will take a broader view of the conflict between the United Nations Space Command and the space-faring Covenant, a perspective that hasn't always been possible in previous Halo games. The campaign storyline is set 20 years before the events of Halo, and it's a story that Halo Wars lead writer Graeme

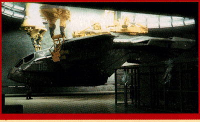
THE FUTURE OF HALO

HALO: THE MOVIE

Not coming to a theater near you

From your TV to the silver screen, humanity's dramatic struggle against the Covenant and virulent Flood would make for a compelling action-packed film. Put away the popcorn and soda, though, as Halo's motion-picture adaptation is on an indefinite hiatus. Universal and Fox have pulled out of a deal with Microsoft to produce the picture, leaving the film floating in limbo. Microsoft assures fans that the movie hasn't been canceled, just temporarily delayed. Whatever that means.

Why the holdup? Moving forward with production depends on working out a royalty agreement between Microsoft and a film studio. Well-known screenwriter D. B. Weiss penned the most recent script, which supposedly casts Master Chief in a supporting role. This script has a new character taking the lead, which would provide a more human face to the movie compared to the visored, unsympathetic creature that is Master Chief. And director Neill Blomkamp should have no problem bringing the script to the screen, given his riveting portrayal of a Warthog assembly line in a live-action short film. Getting Halo off the production line and in front of moviegoers, though, is proving much more difficult. With little progress in securing a studio, it could be years before Master Chief goes Hollywood.



***GAMEPRO'S* PREDICTION:** Halo 3's monster sales have ensured a future for the Halo film...even if it is years off.

MEET THE SPARTANS

Ensemble Studios is still busy adapting the iconic Spartan units into Halo Wars. Here are six things we learned about one of the most powerful, and mysterious, units in Halo Wars.

1 MASTER CHIEF IS ALIVE AND A SPARTAN.

Halo Wars is set some 20 years before the events of Halo, and Ensemble confirmed that Master Chief is a practicing Spartan during this time period. Ensemble wouldn't confirm whether the iconic Halo star would make a cameo appearance in Halo Wars, however. We can always dream...

2 SPARTANS ARE POWERFUL, BUT NOT UNSTOPPABLE.

"Spartans are special, but they need a role, a focus in the battle," Ensemble Studios' Dave Pottinger says. "You won't automatically win by building a huge gang of Spartans." The Ensemble team is still working hard to make the Spartans a badass, but fair, fighting unit in Halo Wars.

3 YOU EARN THEM FASTER THAN YOU THINK.

In 2531, the MJOLNIR technology is still in its infancy, and the Spartan program is just kicking into gear. Even though the Spartans represent the cutting edge of the UNSC's military technology, you won't have to wait long to unlock them in the game. "The Spartan is the best unit, cost-for-cost, in the USNC," Chris Rippy says. "And we want you to use them in pretty much every game."

4 SPARTANS WILL TURN HEADS ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

It's not every day that the USNC deploys cybernetically enhanced super soldiers. When you send Spartans into the field, nearby Marine units will respond with relief and awe ("Look, Spartans!") via the game's battle chatter system.

5 SPARTANS DON'T HAVE ENERGY SHIELDS.

...but they'll heal anyway. Since Halo Wars is set before the invention of Master Chief's shield-imbued Mk. V MJOLNIR armor, Ensemble had to balance player expectations with staying faithful to the Halo timeline. Though Halo War's Spartans won't have shield technology, Ensemble says they will quickly recover from combat wounds.

6 SPARTANS DON'T KICK ENOUGH ASS YET.

Halo's iconic Spartans have quite a reputation to live up to, and Ensemble knows that expectations are high. The studio is still busy balancing the skills of the Spartans, but promises that they'll be one of the coolest, most distinctive units in the game.

CONTINUED ▶

ULTIMATE CONTROL

Halo Wars takes great pains to streamline the strategy genre. Here's a look at its sleek, simple control scheme.

Left Bumper: Select all squads on screen*
Left Bumper x2: Select all squads in the world*
Left Trigger: Hold to quickly move the camera

Directional Pad: Jump to areas of map (Bases, armies, etc)

Left Stick: Move Camera

Back: Objectives
Start: Ingame Menu and Options

Right Trigger: Modify (such as queuing waypoints for squad movement)
Right Bumper: Cycle through groups of units in current selection*

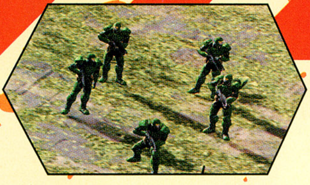
A: Select individual squad/hold to "Paint Select" group of squads
B: Cancel selection
X: Move/Gather/Primary Attack
Y: Secondary Attack (Marines can throw grenades, Warthogs can ram enemies)

Right Stick: Rotate/Zoom Camera

*Tentative function; may change in final version.

UNSC UNITS

Thanks to Ensemble Studios, the UNSC Marines have a fleshed-out fleet that are packing state-of-the-art firepower. Here are new details on the units and troops you'll control in Halo Wars.



MARINES

UNSC Marines are the lifeblood of your fighting force. These scrappy soldiers are a cheap but effective unit, and en masse can lay down a punishing field of assault rifle fire. Tapping the secondary attack button activates a special grenade skill, which can wreak havoc against tougher foes.

Known upgrades: Rocket launchers, squad medic

FLAMETHROWER MARINES

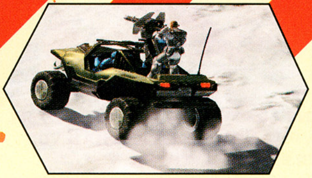
Equipped with powerful flamethrowers, this Marine variant inflicts major damage on any organic enemy, particularly infantry units. Though they pack a punch, Flamethrower Marines must attack from a closer range, which opens them up to counterattack.

Known upgrades: Improvements to fire damage and defense

SPARTANS

The most mysterious unit type in all of Halo Wars, the iconic Spartans are shown here in their Mk. I prototype MJOLNIR armor. Ensemble's developers were careful to point out that the Spartans in Halo Wars aren't an army of invincible Master Chiefs, and can be wiped out if used carelessly. Spartans are said to carry SMGs, ala Halo 2.

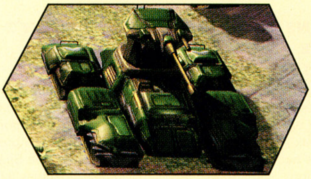
Known upgrades: Little is known about Halo War's Spartan units, but Ensemble mentioned a possible dual-wield weapon upgrade which would increase their offensive power.



WARTHOG

An iconic vehicle in the Halo series, the Warthog has proven to be a challenge to integrate into a strategy game. Each match, you start with one unarmed Warthog which you can use to scout terrain and collect nearby supplies. By adding armed passengers and snipers, you can further beef up the Warthog's offensive potential. Its secondary attack makes it slam into nearby enemies.

Known upgrades: Chaingun turret, Gauss gun turret, passengers



SCORPION

The heavily armored Scorpion tank inflicts massive damage with its primary cannon, but struggles to track fast-moving targets. One of the special Corps upgrades, the Grizzly, adds a double-barreled cannon and a flamethrower that can roast surrounding troops.

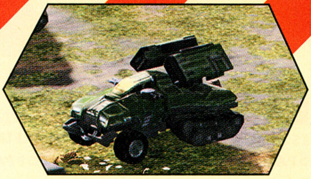
Known upgrades: Explosive shells, faster turret servo, Grizzly variant

COBRA

A new vehicle for Halo Wars, the Cobra helps balance out the UNSC force due to its potent anti-vehicle rockets. It can also be deployed in order to fire long-range artillery. Even Scorpions aren't safe from its armor-piercing barrage.

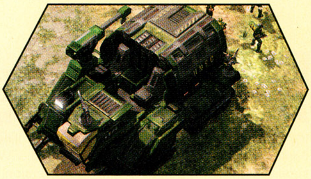
HORNET

A light recon aircraft equipped with irritating machine guns, the Hornet can accommodate extra Marines and gunners for increased offensive power. The first, and lowliest, of the USNC's air units, though its speed and maneuverability give it an edge.



WOLVERINE

This new USNC vehicle has a specialized role: anti-aircraft. The Wolverine's surface-to-air missiles devastate enemy aircraft and buildings, but it's virtually defenseless against powerful enemy ground units so you'll have to protect it. A potent counterpunch to enemy Banshees and Hornets.



ELEPHANT

A prototype of the Elephant mobile base introduced in Halo 3, this heavy-duty vehicle works like a mobile barracks. Once deployed into its stationary position, the Elephant can train new Marines and pelt nearby enemies with its powerful turrets. The Elephant is a special unit that can be deployed by the UNSC's Fleet faction.

CYCLOPS

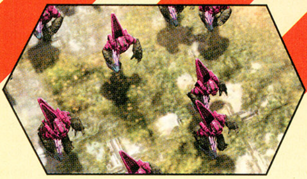
A nod to the Cyclops unit in Ensemble's Age of Mythology, this special UNSC unit is a gigantic bipedal mech that can level enemy structures with blows from its powerful arms. The Cyclops is a close-range combat unit, but can traverse the map with surprising speed in order to reach the enemy base. Cyclops can be deployed by the USNC's Corps faction.

VULTURE

A new vehicle designed by Ensemble Studios for Halo Wars, this heavy gunship is the star of the UNSC fleet. It moves slowly, but dishes out enormous damage by firing volleys of rockets at ground and air units. Its Barrage upgrade is especially deadly, unleashing an alarming amount of firepower at a heavily armored vehicle or structure.

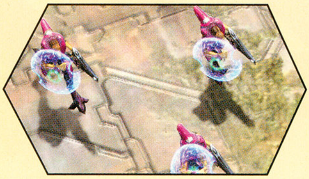
COVENANT UNITS

Featured in Halo Wars' Campaign mode, the Covenant have not yet been confirmed to be playable. Details on their tactics remain scarce, but we have learned a few details.



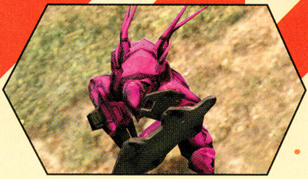
GRUNTS

The very definition of "cannon fodder," these pipsqueaks are the Covenant's basic infantry unit. They're often armed with Needlers, which are particularly effective against Marines and other low-level infantry.



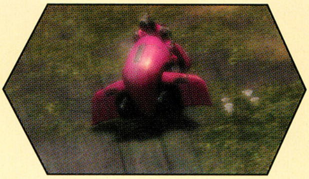
JACKALS

Known to be adept snipers and scouts, we learned few details about the Jackals that appear in Halo Wars. We did, however, spot several scattered Jackal bands skulking around the fringes of our multiplayer matches.



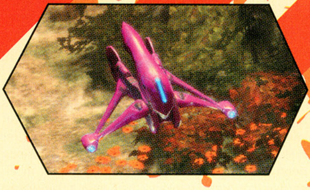
HUNTERS

These armored goliaths are comprised of a colony of symbiotic eel-like creatures. Working in pairs, Hunters use their fuel rod guns to devastating effect. They're confirmed to be in Halo Wars, but their behavior and strategic value isn't yet known.



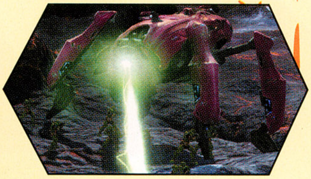
GHOST

This Covenant hovercraft is a basic ground offensive vehicle. From what we see in early gameplay demonstrations, Ghosts appear to be an effective counter to UNSC Warthogs and Marines, though Scorpion tanks can shred a Ghost fleet in seconds.



BANSHEE

This lightweight aircraft is a potent force on the battlefield, but a UNSC Wolverine can quickly clip its wings.



SCARAB

The mother of all Covenant units, this war machine emits a stream of white-hot plasma like water from a garden hose, melting tanks and ground units in seconds. Luckily, a direct shot from the Spirit of Fire's orbital MAC cannon should be enough to bury the Scarab.

ELITES

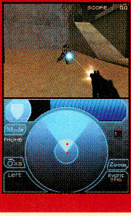
As in the other Halo games, Elites tend to hang back from the front lines of battle. Roughly equivalent to the UNSC Spartans, Elites are expected to be among the toughest ground infantry in Halo Wars.

THE FUTURE OF HALO

HALO DS

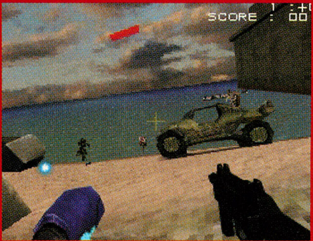
The handheld Halo that wasn't

This stylus-controlled shooter promised to put Master Chief in your pocket for on-the-go Halo action. Similar to Metroid Prime Hunters, Halo DS had you tapping the touch screen to aim and shoot while running through levels using the directional pad to move. Pressing the shoulder buttons switched weapons, which naturally could be combined for a bit of dual-wielding action.



Despite its promising direction, it's unlikely that you'll be playing Halo DS anytime soon. According to IGN's scoop on this secret project, Halo DS was canned after Microsoft and the "known" (but unnamed) developer couldn't reach a licensing agreement. Bungie's Brian Jarrard later called the game an "unsolicited pitch." It's a shame Halo DS was never released, because you just know that wireless multiplayer would've been *so awesome.*

***GAMEPRO'S* PREDICTION:** Microsoft is allowing its Viva Pinata: Pocket Paradise to head to the DS, so why not Halo? We suspect Halo DS will happen...eventually.



CONTINUED ▶

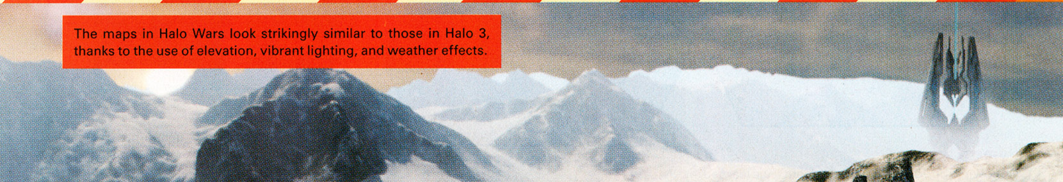
Devine says will set the stage for the first Halo. The specifics of the Halo Wars storyline are still a deeply held secret, but Devine did provide a basic overview of the plot. Halo Wars follows the crew of a UNSC support vessel called Spirit of Fire as it undertakes a dangerous mission, and first encounters the disjointed mish-mash of alien races that make up the Covenant. "At this point in history, the Covenant is at its most evil," Devine says. "They are hell-bent on the destruction of humanity, on scouring us from the universe" in their suicidal search for the fabled Halo ring worlds. Halo Wars also introduces a new villain in its campaign mode, a mysterious adversary whom Devine describes as "James-Bond-villain evil."

Halo Wars' campaign mode will take players to a variety of alien worlds the have never been seen or explored by Halo players. One of the first is Harvest, a lush agricultural world that has since been partially "glassed" by the Covenant in an early encounter. Thanks to the Covenant-induced nuclear winter, Harvest is now a cold, barren world that's scarred with plasma burns. Another confirmed planet is Arcadia, a tropical vacation destination that's popular with adventurous tourists. Though Devine wouldn't describe the importance of Arcadia, he hinted that the world holds something of great interest to the Covenant, which sparks a subsequent invasion and mass evacuation. The battles in Halo Wars' campaign mode aren't expected to lead players to the titular ring worlds, as they won't be discovered until 20 years later, but Ensemble Studios confirmed that the Halos will likely appear as maps in the game's multiplayer mode.

MOTHER OF INVENTION

Though the alien Covenant faction is expansive and detailed, Ensemble quickly learned that the USNC side needed to be expanded for a strategy game. So Ensemble fleshed out the scrappy Marines with a collection of new vehicles, all of which bolster the UNSC's ability to stand toe-to-toe with the Covenant in battle. One of the favorite new additions is called the Cyclops, an Iron Man-esque mechanized power suit that excels at beating the stuffing out of enemy buildings. All told, we counted some six new additions to the UNSC's arsenal, and more could be on the way.

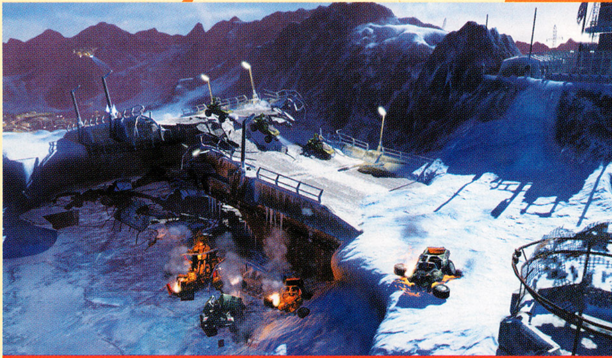
Working in the key details from the Halo shooters has required some crafty thinking from Ensemble. In most RTS games, vehicles simply sit stationary and shoot. That approach won't satisfy Halo players, who expect their Warthogs and Ghosts to be highly maneuverable. But the vehicles in the Halo games feel far more three-dimensional: the Warthog, for example, can run over enemies in addition to blasting them with its chaingun turret. To incorporate more of these concepts, Ensemble added primary and secondary attack buttons for each unit. Tapping the primary attack button will make your Marines fire their assault rifles, for instance. But if you need more stopping power, a tap of the secondary attack button will make them toss out a volley



The maps in Halo Wars look strikingly similar to those in Halo 3, thanks to the use of elevation, vibrant lighting, and weather effects.

of grenades. You won't need to micromanage these secondary attacks, but it's a handy option to have if you're under siege by a superior fighting force.

Even the Sentinels, the Forerunner sentries that watch over the Halo structures, are being worked into Halo Wars. Some multiplayer maps will contain a "Sentinel shop" that players can capture. Commandeer the Sentinel shop and the Sentinels will reinforce your army, firing their beams at any enemy unlucky enough to draw too close. There's even a beefier Sentinel variant that attacks with electromagnetic pulses, which freezes nearby vehicles in their tracks for several crucial seconds. But you've got the keep an iron grip on the Sentinel shop, lest a crafty enemy take control of the Sentinels for himself.


In Halo Wars, the Warthog can be upgraded with various weapon turrets but is most useful as a scout vehicle. It can even vault over gaps and crevices to reach areas that are otherwise inaccessible.

ANOTHER GLORIOUS DAY IN THE CORPS

We picked up an Xbox 360 controller to play a round of four-player Team Skirmish. Though the game was far from complete, it was already obvious that Ensemble's attention to detail is paying off. We found that the basics of Halo Wars take about 30 seconds to grasp, and require the use of only a few key buttons. The interface in Halo Wars feels simple and natural: the left analog stick moves the camera, a button tap will select units or buildings, and holding the A button and "painting" the crowd will select all nearby units. When you're ready to deliver a crushing offensive blow to your enemy, you can tap the Left Bumper to select all of your units at once. Easy! A simple radial menu system keeps your base-building activities simple and streamlined, allowing you to quickly queue up multiple units or structures for rapid deployment. Multi-tasking is easy too, thanks to a directional pad shortcut that will instantly jump you from the field back to your base.

Based on our hands-on sessions, the gameplay style in Halo Wars is pure punch-counterpunch, packing in plenty of fast-paced skirmishes. If your enemy is overwhelming you with low-cost infantry troops, Flame Marines and Warthogs make an effective counter. If you come under assault by airborne forces, you can quickly counter by building a few anti-air Wolverines, plus a Scorpion tank or two to protect them. One of the pleasures of Halo Wars is that Halo players already know the roles of many of the vehicles, so adapting that knowledge to a workable strategy is a simple task. You already know that Warthogs can't absorb heavy damage, so you'll naturally employ them for speedier hit-and-run raids.

As in Halo 3, online multiplayer will be a key focus in Halo Wars. The final version is expected to support up to six players over Xbox Live, and support a variety of modes including Skirmish and Team Skirmish. Meanwhile, the story-driven campaign will support an online cooperative mode for two players, enabling two UNSC forces to team up against the Covenant.

We're convinced. Halo Wars represents a huge challenge for Ensemble Studios, but judging by our experiences with the game, the developer is making some smart decisions. Ensemble isn't ready to confirm a Halo Wars release date yet, but expects that it will arrive in the second half of 2008. And no, it won't be coming to the PC. Ever. For the first time in history, the most eagerly anticipated RTS game of the year is a console exclusive. And we wouldn't have it any other way. ***GP***

Sid Shuman enjoys long moonlit walks, reruns of *Battlestar Galactica*, and blowing the crap out of opponents in Metal Gear Online.

Email Sid at: sid_shuman@gamepro.com

THE FUTURE OF HALO

HALO 3 MAP PACK: ROUND THREE

The third time may be a charm

Despite Bungie Studios' new-found independence, Microsoft retains a vice-like grip over the Halo franchise. But Bungie isn't abandoning Master Chief. The now-independent studio will still have a say in Master Chief's adventures, and has already released two downloadable map packs for Halo 3.

Speaking of Halo 3, inside word has it that a third downloadable map pack may be in the works. Bungie's Brian Jarrard stopped short of confirming a new Halo 3 map pack, but told GamePro that "we're not walking away from Halo 3 yet." So what's Bungie up to? "You'll have to wait a tiny bit longer for more details," Jarrard teased.

***GAMEPRO'S* PREDICTION**: Don't be surprised if a new Halo map pack pops up for download on Xbox Live this fall...but you didn't hear that from us.

WIN

A HALO 3 SPECIAL EDITION XBOX 360 CONSOLE OR ONE OF FIVE HALO 3 LEGENDARY EDITIONS.

VISIT WWW.GAMEPRO.COM/HALOWARS TO ENTER!

SOLID SECRETS

We've played it. We love it. *GamePro* presents the 17 best surprises about PlayStation 3 superstar Metal Gear Solid 4, with a few helpful tips to give you an edge come June 12th.

By Sid Shuman

⑰ Blu-ray disc storage:

Metal Gear Solid 4 is the first game to give the PlayStation 3's Blu-ray drive a serious workout. Using a dual layer 50GB Blu-ray disc, Metal Gear Solid 4 is probably the most data-intensive game ever released on any format. In the case of MGS4, the "Blu-ray advantage" translates into more game content, better-quality audio, and fewer graphical compromises. But Blu-ray isn't a cure-all—Metal Gear mastermind Hideo Kojima has said that 50GB Blu-ray discs *still* don't offer enough storage. Wow!

⑭ Octo-camo:

Metal Gear Solid 3 was a great game, but its clunky camouflage system frustrated gamers by making them delve into menu screens every time the landscape changed. Not so in MGS4: your color-changing armor will automatically shift to match your surroundings, aiding your stealth efforts. You can also restore the armor's default hues at any time by gently shaking the controller...it's a bit like an Etch-a-Sketch.

⑫ The Solid Eye:

Part radar, part vision enhancer, the Solid Eye is a helpful addition to Snake's inventory. When you equip it, you'll gain a radar view to help spot nearby enemies, and nearby weapons and items will be highlighted and identified. There's also optional night vision and binoculars, though these advanced modes will quickly drain your batteries.

⑯ A mature new style:

Previous games in the Metal Gear series have drawn equal inspiration from anime and Bruckheimer-style cinema, featuring cartoonish villains and offbeat humor. But Metal Gear Solid 4 is a different beast, drawing its look and feel from gritty films like *Children of Men* and games like Gears of War. That's not to say that humor is AWOL in MGS4, only that it's used more sparingly.

⑮ Collectible weapons:

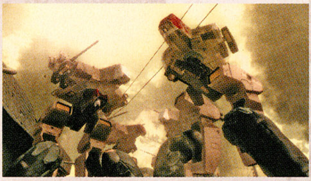
With over 70 weapons in all, gun nuts will find much to celebrate in Metal Gear Solid 4. Many of the guns we've seen are based on real-life weaponry, including the P90 submachine gun carried by the Outer Haven troops, and the M4 carbine that Snake finds early in the game. Once you meet Drebin, a black-market gun launderer, you can "unlock" new weapons you find by paying a small fee in "Drebin Points." You will also automatically cash in any duplicate weapons you find for Drebin Points.

⑬ Aiming down the sight:

In a huge improvement over its predecessors, MGS4 adopts a traditional "aim down the sight" mechanic popularized by games like Call of Duty 4. By tapping Triangle while aiming, you'll switch to a fully mobile first-person perspective where you can move and shoot as in Halo or Call of Duty. If you crouch or lie down while aiming down the sight, your shots will be almost perfectly precise.

⑪ The Geckos:

These gargantuan enemies are new to Metal Gear, and they are fierce foes that are equipped with powerful weapons and sensors. In fact, these bioengineered killing machines are so tough that they're practically indestructible—your best bet is to simply run and hide! Explosive weapons will inflict some damage, but generally, these behemoths are too tough to tackle directly.

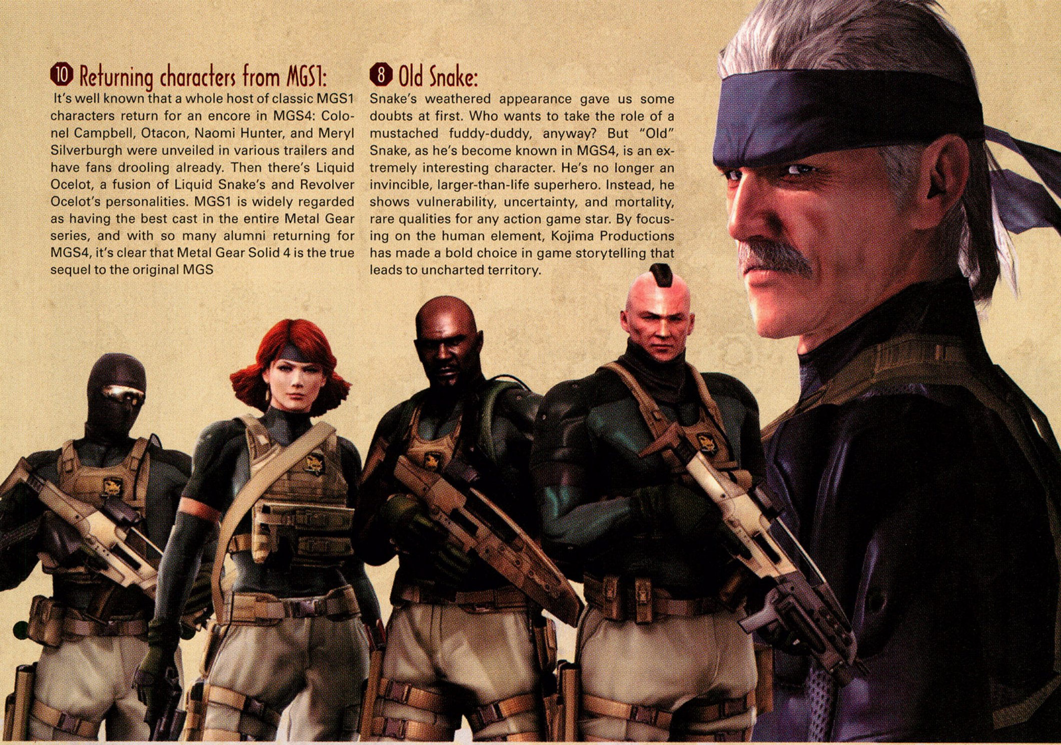


⑩ Returning characters from MGS1:

It's well known that a whole host of classic MGS1 characters return for an encore in MGS4: Colonel Campbell, Otacon, Naomi Hunter, and Meryl Silverburgh were unveiled in various trailers and have fans drooling already. Then there's Liquid Ocelot, a fusion of Liquid Snake's and Revolver Ocelot's personalities. MGS1 is widely regarded as having the best cast in the entire Metal Gear series, and with so many alumni returning for MGS4, it's clear that Metal Gear Solid 4 is the true sequel to the original MGS

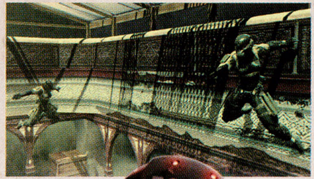
⑧ Old Snake:

Snake's weathered appearance gave us some doubts at first. Who wants to take the role of a mustached fuddy-duddy, anyway? But "Old" Snake, as he's become known in MGS4, is an extremely interesting character. He's no longer an invincible, larger-than-life superhero. Instead, he shows vulnerability, uncertainty, and mortality, rare qualities for any action game star. By focusing on the human element, Kojima Productions has made a bold choice in game storytelling that leads to uncharted territory.



⑨ The Outer Haven soldiers:

This all-female outfit of advanced soldiers serve as Liquid's elite soldiers. Exceptionally agile and well-equipped, the "frogs" fire punishing P90 SMGs. Worse, they're equipped with long talons on their feet and hands, which enable them to cling to ceilings and walls, or bound from wall to wall. They first appear in the latter half of the Middle Eastern level during a climactic gunfight in a run-down hotel.



⑦ Real online multiplayer:

Well, sort of. The Metal Gear series is going online with Metal Gear Online, a new stand-alone online game that will emphasize team-based battles. Metal Gear Solid 4 will include a trial version of Metal Gear Online. We don't know how many levels or modes will be included in this starter pack, but some is definitely better than none.

⑥ The crouch-run:

In prior games, Snake only had two movement possibilities: run or crawl on his belly. Metal Gear Solid 4 helpfully adds an in-between option we're calling the "crouch run." By running in this low-profile position, Snake can move at a brisk pace without totally blowing his cover. To crouch run, simply tap X to crouch and then start moving. It's a very handy position that also grants extra firing precision.

⑤ DualShock 3 support:

Rumble is back! The Metal Gear series and rumble technology have a long history; Metal Gear Solid was one of the first games to use the original DualShock's rumble function, and its implementation was hailed by as groundbreaking. MGS4 is fully compatible with the rumble-capable DualShock 3 controller, and though it's not required, rumble adds much to the feel of MGS4. Even the cinemas are made richer through rumble effects.

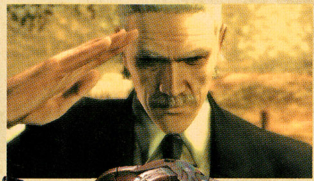
CONTINUED ▶

❹ The Beauty & the Beast unit:

First introduced last fall, the Beauty & the Beast unit is a group of four metal monstrosities who represent Liquid Ocelot's most trusted lieutenants and, obviously, key obstacles for Snake. These including Laughing Octopus, a master of disguise equipped with Doctor Octopus-style tentacles; Crying Wolf, an armored quadruped with enormous strength; Raging Raven, an airborne killing machine equipped with multiple rocket launchers; and Screaming Mantis, a mysterious figure who appears to control the actions of her squad mates.

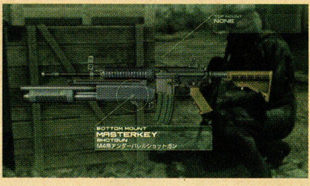
❸ Story line closure:

It's all been leading up to this! Though the individual plot lines of the three previous games all had some form of closure, Solid Snake's tale has remained elusive...and unfinished. Luckily, Metal Gear Solid 4 promises to tie up loose threads and shed new light on Snake himself. Will he find peace? Will he simply kill himself, as hinted at in the first trailer? For now, we can only wait for the big day.



❷ Weapon mods:

One of MGS4's most tantalizing features is the ability to customize your weapons with modifications. Most weapons will accept basic silencers, but others will accept recoil-control grips (handy for improving accuracy), flashlights (which blind enemies in dark locations), laser sights (helpful for firing from the hip), and rifle scopes. The stock M4, a handy weapon, also accepts an under-barrel grenade launcher or under-barrel shotgun. You fire these powerful sub-weapons by tapping R2 while aiming (press and hold L1).



❶ Simpler controls:

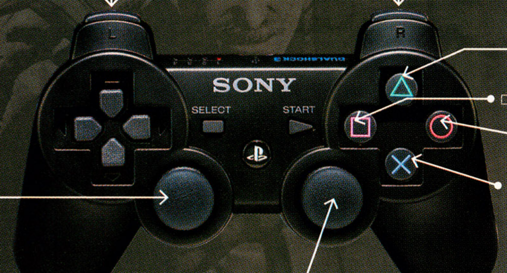
If you enjoy Gears of War, Call of Duty 4, or Rainbow Six Vegas, you'll instantly take to the new control scheme in Metal Gear Solid 4. Overall, the controls are much simpler than in previous Metal Gear games, and means you'll hit the ground running, ready to fight, on June 12th. Even Snake's new stealth moves, such as "the inchworm," are easy to perform.

Taming Snake

Metal Gear Solid 4 boasts the most user-friendly controls of any MGS game to date. In particular, North American players will find the newly modernized interface to be instantly accessible and utterly natural. If you like Gears of War and Halo 3, you'll find plenty to love here!

Controller Legend

L2: Hold to select weapons
L1: Aim weapon (over-the-shoulder view)
R2: Hold to select items
R1: Fire weapon; hand-to-hand attacks



△: Wall press; aim down sights (while aiming)
□: Activate auto-aim
○: Reload weapon
×: Crouch; hold to lie down
Left Stick: Move Snake; press gently to creep
Right Stick: Move camera, aim weapon

PLATINUM HITS
$29.99

LOST PLANET™
EXTREME CONDITION
COLONIES EDITION

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

- 7 NEW multiplayer modes
- 20 multiplayer maps
- Play as the Akrid for the first time
- 5 NEW playable characters
- 3 NEW single player campaign modes

CAPCOM®

The way it's nVIDIA. meant to be played

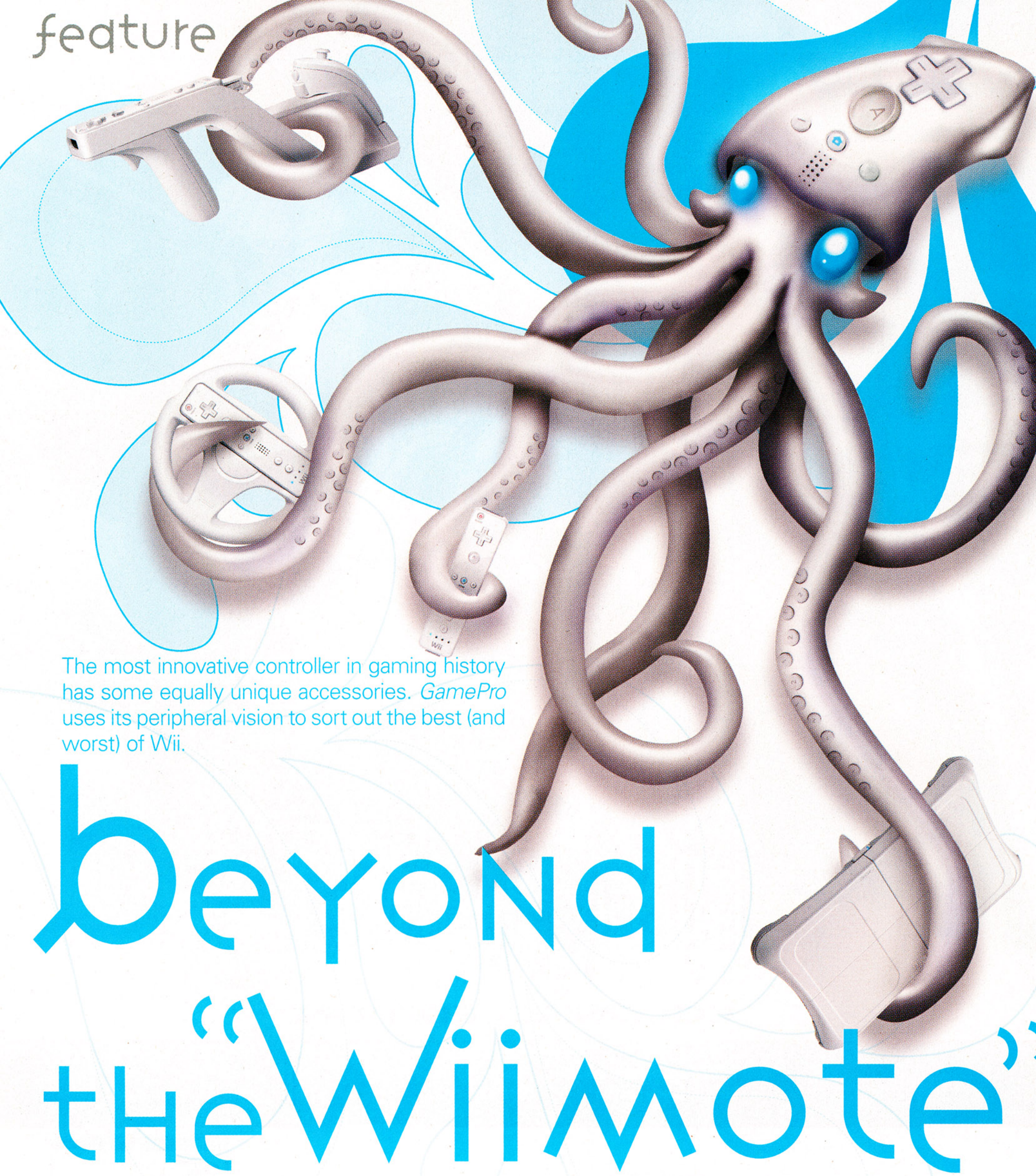
lostplanetcommunity.com

TEEN
T
Animated Blood
Mild Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Character Wayne by ©Lee Byung Hun/BH Entertainment CO., LTD, ©CAPCOM CO., LTD. 2008 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. CAPCOM and the CAPCOM LOGO are registered trademarks of CAPCOM CO., LTD. LOST PLANET is a trademark of CAPCOM CO., LTD. "LOST PLANET COLONIES" uses Havok™: ©Copyright 1999-2008. Havok.com Inc. (or its licensors). All Rights Reserved. Microsoft, Windows, the Windows Vista Start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are either trademarks or registered trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. 'Games for Windows' and the Windows Vista Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft. NVIDIA, the NVIDIA logo, and The Way It's Meant To Be Played logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation.The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are owned by their respective owners.

Games for Windows LIVE

XBOX 360 LIVE



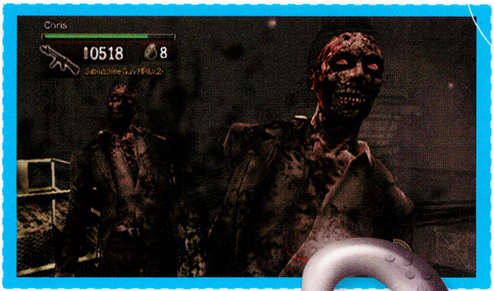
The most innovative controller in gaming history has some equally unique accessories. *GamePro* uses its peripheral vision to sort out the best (and worst) of Wii.

beyond the “Wiimote”?

The Nintendo Wii has been a large part of the company’s resurgence. Along with the DS, the Wii has shown that Nintendo’s willingness to think outside of the console box could make it this round’s console war winner when all is said and done. But even when the Nintendo hits, as it has with the Wii’s innovative control method, the gaming giant is still prone to making major accessory blunders like R.O.B the Robot (NES) and the Super Scope 6 (SNES). With that in mind, *GamePro*’s giving its honest opinion on the family of attachments and accessories offered by Nintendo and third-party manufacturers.

The Zapper

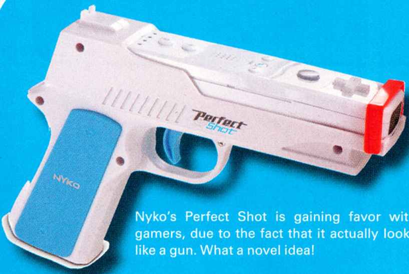
At $20 with a not-completely terrible pack-in (Link's Crossbow Training), the Wii Zapper is probably the best accessory deal. That doesn't make it any easier to use.



Named after one of the NES's most cherished accessories, the Wii Zapper bears little resemblance to the original lightgun. The Wii Zapper is a hollow plastic molding; you snap your Wii Remote and Nunchuk into it, then hold it like a Tommy gun. The only major advantage to using the Zapper is that the oversized B button (aka the trigger) feels nice and tactile. On the downside, the Zapper makes other buttons—particularly the Nunchuk's Z and C buttons—really, *really* awkward. All in all, it's a nice-looking accessory that sometimes does more harm than it's worth.

Thanks to the Wii Remote's pointing capabilities, the lightgun genre has experienced a renaissance of sorts. New games like Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles and Link's Crossbow Training have made use of the Zapper, though the accessory is completely unnecessary and probably won't improve your aim. In short, the Zapper definitely oozes retro cool, but you don't *need* it to play any Wii games, particularly when there's another gun-based accessory that many of the GamePros prefer—Nyko's Perfect Shot. The Perfect shot has the bonus of leaving the Nunchuk free and unencumbered.

(Almost) Perfect Shot



Nyko's Perfect Shot is gaining favor with gamers, due to the fact that it actually looks like a gun. What a novel idea!

Score:

★★★☆☆

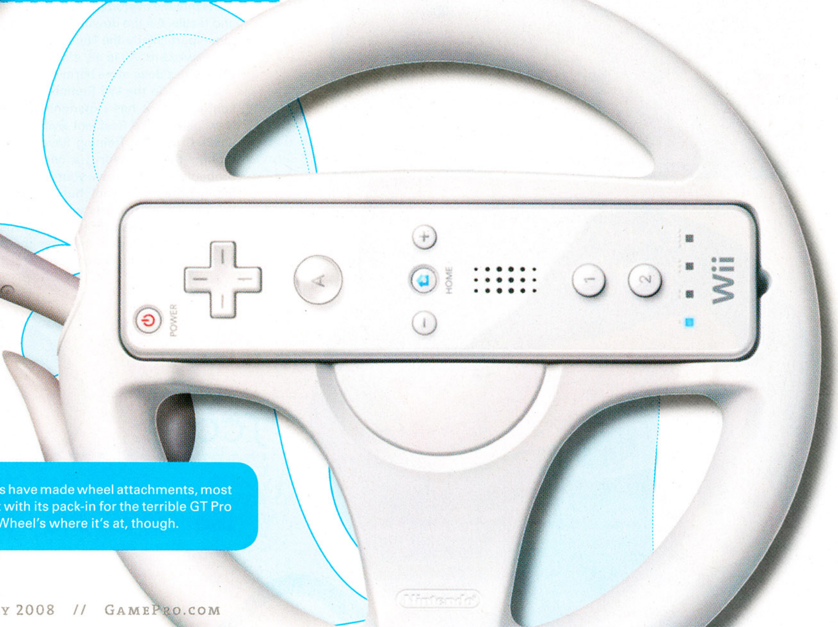
CONTINUED ▶

The Wheel

Outside of Logitech's heavenly Gran Turismo-focused wheels, console steering wheels are usually lemons. Oversensitivity, undersensitivity, remapping controls... whatever the problem, you'll be diving back to the controller in no time. Like the Zapper, the Wii Wheel tries to—ahem—reinvent the wheel by offering a plastic grip for the Wii Remote. You snap the Wii Remote into the Wheel, hold the combined contraption upright, and steer it as you would a normal steering wheel. Sort of. The Wheel isn't attached to a steering column or anything, so you'll have to learn to keep it still and centered while rotating it left and right...a challenge in speedy games like Mario Kart Wii.

The Wii Wheel is included with Mario Kart Wii, and while it's the least preferable control method, we're genuinely surprised by how well it works. Several Wii racing games already use the Wii Remote in a horizontal steering motion, and these will generally work well with the Wheel. We fired up a round of Excite Truck and found that the Wheel works nicely in a pinch. Now EA, where's our Wii Burnout?

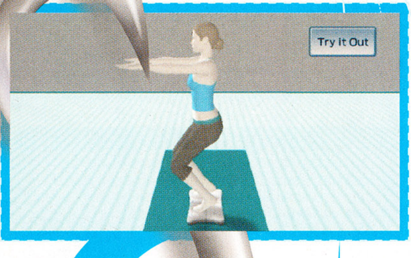
Score: ★★★★☆



Other companies have made wheel attachments, most notably Ubi Soft with its pack-in for the terrible GT Pro Series. The Wii Wheel's where it's at, though.

When you consider the fact that you're getting a high-quality weighing scale, a stellar workout program, and a useful new kind of controller with the Balance Board, $90 doesn't seem so costly.

The Balance Board



There aren't many accessories that have come directly from the mind of Miyamoto, but the Wii Balance Board is one of them. Born out of the famed developer's newfound fondness of fitness, the Wii Balance Board is a combination of bathroom scale and dance pad. The Balance Board is by far the most expensive accessory in this article, pushing Wii Fit's retail price up to a lofty $90, but it really does have some powerful hardware at work. With four sensors and the ability to detect the pressure of foot presses, the Wii Fit is almost as innovative as the Wii Remote itself.

Right now, there's only one title available—the pack-in, Wii Fit. As far as included games go, though, this one's pretty darn good. The game's mixture of entertaining mini-games and useful exercise activities makes the total package one of the Wii's most important games. Third-party developers are getting in on the Fit action, too: Namco's hyping We Ski as a Balance Board title, and EA is adding Balance Board support to its upcoming Skate It. Nintendo's putting its weight behind this unique accessory, and we've got a hunch the Balance Board won't be a one-game wonder.

Score: ★★★★★

CONTINUED ▶

The Others

Cooking Mama Kit

Cooking Mama has been a surprise hit on the Wii, even if the gameplay's been downgraded from the DS. CTA Digital's Cooking Mama Kit attempts to add some flavor to the game by offering attachments for the various kitchen utensils, but the attempt is a little stale. Quite simply, there are *too* many appliances to flip through, and the game cycles through them so quickly that you really don't get a feel for this kit.

Score: ★★☆☆☆

Wii Nerf Sports Pack and Wii Boxing Glove

As of the end of 2007, almost 18 million people own Wii Sports. That's not a typo. Sure, it's a bundled game, but it's still amazingly popular, and the most recognizable title on the system. With an amazing installed base, it's a real surprise that it took months and not days for a set of sports-based attachments to pop up. Between Pelican's set and the EZ Gear glove, you'll probably end up spending more than the cost of a game equipping yourself for Wii Sports, but these accessories have an added benefit. The gloves and the soft Nerf foam make these items perfect for launching real-life assaults on your opponents.

Score: ★★★⯪☆

Wii Combat Pack

Besides Wii Sports, the other game that sold gangbusters at launch was The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. While it may not have been a complete motion-sensing slashfest, being able to dictate some of Link's sword strikes was a major appeal for gamers. The Wii Combat Pack may not be the most natural fit—rumor has it the sword blocks off the sensor—but for the $10 going price, it's a neat accessory to have on display anyway.

Score: ★★⯪☆☆

The one benefit of the Cord-Free? You can now set your Nunchuck upright on a table due to the base. That's not really worth $35, tough. Maybe $3.50, tops.

Why Wii Wireless?

If you've ever cursed your excessively large wingspan, Nyko's got a pair of wireless Nunchuck solutions to allow your left and right arms to have some space. We've put our massive paws on both and graded them for all you Wii wireless-lovers.

Cord-Free

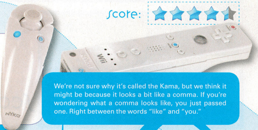
The company's first product was the Cord-Free, which was an adaptor that you plugged the Nunchuck into. From there, you had to sync the adaptor to your Wii Remote (which also required an adaptor). The synching process was a bit cumbersome, as was the Nunchuck base. It broke the cardinal rule of wireless controllers by feeling worse than the wired standard, and affecting the gameplay experience negatively.

Score: ★★★☆☆

Kama

The Kama was Nyko's second, much more successful attempt at cutting the cord. The Kama is a Wireless Nunchuck that comes with an adaptor that snaps onto the Wii Remote. The Kama feels just as good as Nintendo's own Nunchuck, and the synching process is much easier. Nyko's offering up limited edition colors on its website, so snatch them up there while you still have the chance!

Score: ★★★★⯪



We're not sure why it's called the Kama, but we think it might be because it looks a bit like a comma. If you're wondering what a comma looks like, you just passed one. Right between the words "like" and "you."

Dave Rudden is *GamePro*'s resident pop-culture junkie, presiding over OMGLists.com as well as providing offbeat features for GamePro.com. He's also got a closet filled with bizarre gaming accessories. Anyone need a spare drum for Taiko Drum Master?.

Reach him at drudden@gamepro.com.

Complete your GAMEPRO Collection!

GAMEPRO
HALO 3
GTA IV: GAMEPLAY & MULTIPLAYER REVEALED!
METROID AND ZELDA
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
FALL PREVIEW GUIDE
FREE HALO 3 POSTER INSIDE!!!
NINTENDO DS EXCLUSIVE
MAN OF THE YEAR
TEKKEN 5
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
ZELDA!
NARUTO
PS3 BIG GUNS!
DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI 2
METAL GEAR SOLID 4
DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI 3
HALO 2, KILLZONE, METROID PRIME 2
THE HOTTEST GAMES FOR THE HOLIDAYS!
DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI TENKAICHI
METAL GEAR SOLID 3 SNAKE EATER
CALL OF DUTY 3
WWE

Are you missing an issue of *GamePro*? We have these and many more of our past issues still available!

If you are missing just one *GamePro*, or would like to buy a whole set, go to www.gamepro.com/backissues

Sex Stealing Slaughter

The Grand Theft Auto IV Guide to Sin

By now, you've probably played through Grand Theft Auto IV and know every mission backwards and forwards. *GamePro* won't waste your time talking you through that. Instead, we're focusing on what GTA's really about—the crazy $&#% you can do when you just wanna mess around. Read on to find out about the fastest cars, the hottest women, and the strongest weapons!

Score with Liberty City's Finest

Girls, Girls, Girls!

Grand Theft Auto's signature hookers are still working the streets in GTAIV, but they're not as easy to find as in previous games. But with these tips, you'll be able to reel in the ladies in no time.

Picking Up Streetwalkers

Step 1: Know Where to Look

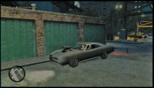
Liberty City suffers from a moderate hooker drought. If you're looking for a cheap date and a quick health bonus, Normandy in Alderny City is rife with prostitutes and is an excellent place to pick up a lady of the night.

Step 2: Find the Perfect Girl

There's quite a bit of variety among Liberty City's sex workers, and you're sure to find one that fits your tastes. If you're in the mood for a girl packing an enormous badonkadonk, then cruise around and you'll eventually find what you're looking for.

Step 3: Honk if You're Horny

Once you've found the girl of your dreams and you're in a vehicle that seats at least two, start driving slow and honk the car horn to get a prostitute to enter your ride. Drive to a discreet spot (alleys work nicely) to seal the deal.



Step 4: Customize Your Service

When you have your hooker right where you want her, you have a few different payment options. Think of it like purchasing gasoline: You'll pay $20 for regular unleaded, $50 for unleaded plus, and $70 for super unleaded. Use your filthy imagination, pervert.

Making Booty Calls

If soliciting a prostitute is not your style, you can get yourself a woman the old fashion way, by punching their digits into your mobile phone. Scoring with these women isn't as easy as giving them a call, but you'll be a professional player by using these pointers.

Step 1: Cycle through Your Numbers

The first step to scoring a date is your cell phone. Scroll through your contact list and call up the girl you want to check if they're available.

Step 2: Don't Be Late

It's best to be near your date's house when you schedule a date. Once you make date plans, you have limited time to meet up or you'll blow the date. Try not to rush, as you may pull into your lady friend's driveway with a whole precinct of cops in pursuit. Which is *so* not cool on a first date.

Step 3: Take Her Someplace Nice

Liberty City is loaded with hot spots that are perfect for any occasion. Impress your date by rolling up to a classy restaurant or a cabaret club. If you're looking to go someplace fun there are bowling alleys and pool halls. Or you could just cut to the chase and get hammered at a bar.

Step 4: Git 'er Done

If all goes well and your lady friend is ready to invite you up for some hot coffee, you can press a button when prompted to try your luck. But don't be too disappointed if she turns you down because it might take a few dates to win her trust.

Proper Strip Club Etiquette

If you don't want to deal with the hassle of going on a date or trying to pick up a prostitute, you can always head on over to a strip club for a good time. Follow these tips to get the most out of your visit.

Step 1: Find a Strip Club

We recommend the Triangle Club, located in Liberty City's Northern Gardens. This gentleman's club is able to suit the needs of just about any patron.

Step 2: Scope Out the Place

In addition to the beautiful women swinging around on poles and shaking their assets, ladies will prowl the floor looking to give guys private dances...for a price. Clubs will have you covered with just about any type of woman, from blue-haired freaks with nipple pasties to pony-tailed Southern gals. Choose wisely, young Jedi.

Step 3: Get a Private Dance

After you pick your dancer, follow her to the VIP area and get ready for a show. Press a button on the controller to change the camera angle during your private dance. The controller will also vibrate as you receive your lap dance, granting additional stimulation.

Step 4: Bang for Your Buck

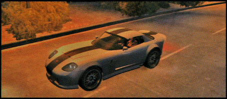
Once your dance has concluded, you can pay the dancer for a second and much more intimate dance. If you don't want the fun to end there, pay for a third dance and a second dancer will join in, creating a "Niko sandwich." The result: pure class!

CONTINUED ▶

Jack These Rides

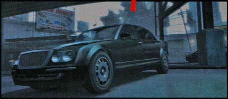
The 8 Best Cars to Steal in Grand Theft Auto IV

Grand Theft Auto IV is crammed with more vehicles than you can count, but many of them aren't even worth stealing. Stick to these *GamePro*-approved vehicles and you'll be in fine shape.



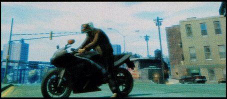
Banshee

Modeled after the real life Dodge Viper, the Banshee remains a reliable speedster capable of outrunning the fuzz in just about any situation.



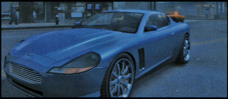
Cognoscenti

Though hard to come by, the Cognoscenti is targeted to automobile connoisseurs. Conduct your next drive-by in style with this luxury vehicle.



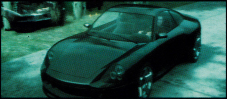
NRG-900

Offering a bit more control than the Hellfury, the NRG-900 super sport bike makes you feel like you're straddling a missile as you race to your destinations. It's also an ideal choice for launching off hidden stunt jumps.



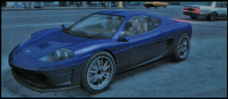
Super GT

Just like its real world counterpart, the Aston Martin DB9, the SuperGT is the ultimate answer to your need for speed. It's one of the most sought-after vehicles in Grand Theft Auto IV.



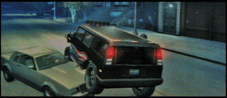
Comet

Strikingly similar to the Porsche Carrera, GTAIV's Comet is a favorite with Liberty City's yuppie crowd and will have you screaming through hairpin turns.



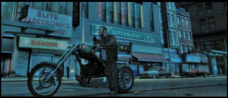
Turismo

It won't be easy to find, but once your score the blisteringly fast Turismo, you won't want to drive anything else.



Patriot

Though not counted among the speediest vehicles, the Patriot makes up for its sluggishness with its massive size and weight: it can literally smash through lesser vehicles. Find the version that sports the American flag side decal for bonus America points.



Hellfury

The most dangerous ride in Liberty City also happens to be the most fun. Coincidence? Nothing says "badass" more than riding through the city in this Hellfury chopper.

Deadly Weapons

Mastering the 5 Best Guns and Explosives in GTAIV

Molotov Cocktail

Sure, roasting people to death with a Molotov cocktail is evil, but it's also one of the most satisfying ways to kill in the game. Pitch one of these flaming bottles into a large group of people and reduce them to ashes.

Grenades

Like the Molotov cocktail, grenades are useful for clearing out several enemy targets. The grenades are a little more humane than the cocktails, though, as they kill instantly.

Knife

The knife might not sound impressive compared to the chainsaws and katanas of past GTA games, but looks can be deceiving. The knife in GTAIV is an extremely powerful close-quarters weapon, and can finish an enemy off with just a few stabs.

EMERGENCY • EMERGENC

Winchester Defender

With GTAIV, you get two shotgun flavors: the standard 12-gauge shotgun and the semi-automatic Winchester Defender. This bad boy can wipe out multiple enemies in the blink of an eye thanks to its speedy reload time.

Rocket Launcher

Deploying RPGs in the game is generally your best option in immobilizing large clusters of enemies, helicopters, and army vehicles, but it takes a bit more skill to blow up targets with the Rocket Launcher in Grand Theft Auto IV. Make sure you line up the reticule with where you anticipate your target will be in the couple of seconds it takes for the rocket to exit the weapon—you'll have to be extremely accurate to get a direct hit.

CONTINUED ▶

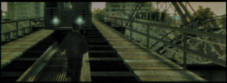
CHEATS!

You want 'em, you got 'em! Enter these numbers into your phone to enhance your GTA experience! Beware, as using these will disable achievements and detract from your completion percentage.

Change weather	468-555-0100
Get a different selection of weapons	486-555-0150
Get a selection of weapons	486-555-0100
Raise wanted level	267-555-0150
Remove wanted level	267-555-0100
Restore armor	362-555-0100
Restore health	482-555-0100
Song information	948-555-0100
Spawn a Cognoscenti	227-555-0142
Spawn a Comet	227-555-0175
Spawn a Jetmax	938-555-0100
Spawn a Sanchez	625-555-0150
Spawn a SuperGT	227-555-0168
Spawn a Turismo	227-555-0147
Spawn an Annihilator	359-555-0100
Spawn an FIB Buffalo	227-555-0100
Spawn an NRG-900	625-555-0100

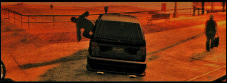
Creating Carnage: Eight Ways to Mess With Liberty Citizens

Here are the *GamePro* staff's eight favorite ways to go nuts in Grand Theft Auto IV, from old-school stunts to new acts of destruction.



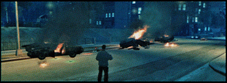
Catch the Train

Liberty City's subway trains come fast and often, and getting hit by one means instant death. That translates into some white-knuckle fun as you run or ride your motorcycle on the tracks directly into an oncoming train. It's the ultimate game of chicken—can you escape in time?



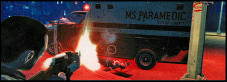
Death by Shotgun

Jacking cars is the name of the game in Grand Theft Auto—literally. But you can add a delicious twist by yanking a driver out of his seat while his passenger remains in the car. You've got to hit the gas really fast to keep your co-pilot on board, and not stop for anything. Except for when you hop out before sending the car soaring off a pier.



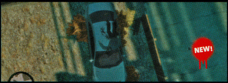
The Chain Reaction

Sometimes, it's all about asploding things. GTAIV allows an amazing amount of vehicles on screen at the same time. Take advantage of that by jacking a large amount of cars in one neighborhood—keep a gun on you so the drivers don't fight back—and then blowing the whole lot up by tossing a grenade into the pileup.



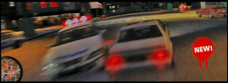
Circle of Death

Step one is simple. Find an unsuspecting innocent in public and kill him. More often than not, a medic will arrive to resuscitate him. Find a nearby car and plow through the medic and take his ambulance. That will usually attract the attention of police. When the cops arrive, use the ambulance to run over a cop. Then take the cop car, and try to evade detection. Once you do, find an unsuspecting innocent...



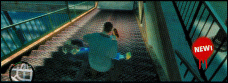
Instant Sunroof

This one's a toughie. Find someone at a high vantage point and park a few cars at the base of their building. Snipe them from afar and try to get their corpse to total the automobiles below! If that's proving too tough, you can always make the leap yourself...



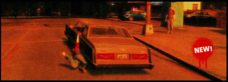
Drink, Drive, Stay Alive

Taxis may be the safest way to get home after a night of drinking, but if you need to save some cash, you can test fate by driving under the influence. You'll suffer from delayed reactions, a fuzzy view of the road, and a constantly swerving car, which means that avoiding the police—and potential death—takes nerves of steel and the brains of a moron.



Stairing Contest

Niko's got a neat little pushing move reminiscent of Altair in Assassin's Creed. Just walk into someone and they'll get a little shove. This can be fun if you lead a friend to a balcony or the top of a stairs, and then push them into a world of pain. Just don't expect them to be your friend for much longer.

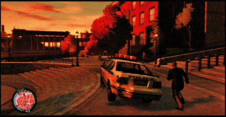


The Doorstop

Drivers in GTAIV will resort to more drastic measures to save their wheels. If you hesitate to drive away after stealing a car, the original driver will often try to pull you out. If you can time it correctly, hitting the gas just as he grabs the door, the poor sap will be caught dangling from the door handle. Try to see how long you can keep the moron moving!

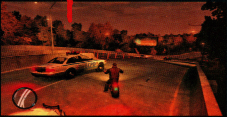
F*&%! The Police!

FIGHT THE LAW... AND WIN!



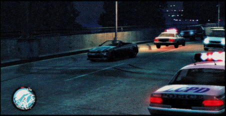
TIP 1: Forge Your Own Path

Cops usually stick to the road, but good criminals don't. If you're having a tough time shedding the police, consider off-beat paths like parks and back alleys. Just beware of rougher terrain and less room to roam.



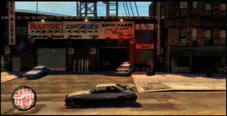
TIP 2: Consider Alternate Transport

Motorcycles and helicopters are a fugitive's best friends. The former is good to squeeze through tight spaces and narrow alleys, while the latter will get you out of harm's way faster.



TIP 3: Highway Snobbery

A good way to lose the fuzz is by getting the cops to crash their cars. If you've got a steady hand, drive your car into oncoming traffic to throw your pursuers for a loop. Highways and bridges are most often gridlocked.

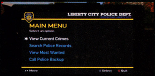


TIP 4: A Fresh Coat (or Car)

When all else fails, ditching your wheels is the best bet. By visiting the Pay N Spray or jacking another car while outside of the eyes of the law, you can shed those stars and get back to your seedy life in Liberty City.

Bad Cop, Bad Cop

Once you've escaped capture, you can do quite a bit with a Liberty City police car. Here's a guide to using the police computer for your own nefarious purposes.



LIBERTY CITY POLICE DEPT.
PROTECTING LIBERTY CITY

MAIN MENU
Select an option

- View Current Crimes
- Search Police Records
- View Most Wanted
- Call Police Backup

Move Select Quit

Take a Bite Out of Crime

Selecting "View Current Crimes" allows you to learn about the many random crimes occurring on the streets of Liberty City. You can pick any one of them and attempt to take out the criminals within an allotted time.

Liberty's Most Wanted

Choosing "Most Wanted" brings up a list of the 10 most-wanted criminals in each of Liberty City's three islands. There's no time limit involved, and the criminals are a bit tougher to take down. Generally speaking, these criminals are well armed and boast backup. Fortunately, if you're riding in a police car, you can get some backup of your own...

Working with the Pigs

Choosing "Call for Backup" summons a few extra police cars to your current location. Upon their arrival, they'll take out the criminals as long as you keep out of sight. If nothing's going on, they'll roam the area, leaving their car free for the jacking.

Patrick Shaw inhales Cheetos while watching gore films and is still eagerly awaiting Killzone 2. His favorite GTAIV radio station is Liberty City Hardcore.

Reach him at pshaw@gamepro.com

Dave Rudden is the editor of OMGLists.com and provides many interesting features and interviews for GamePro.com. His favorite GTAIV radio station is The Classics 104.1.

Reach him at drudden@gamepro.com

GAME OF THE MONTH

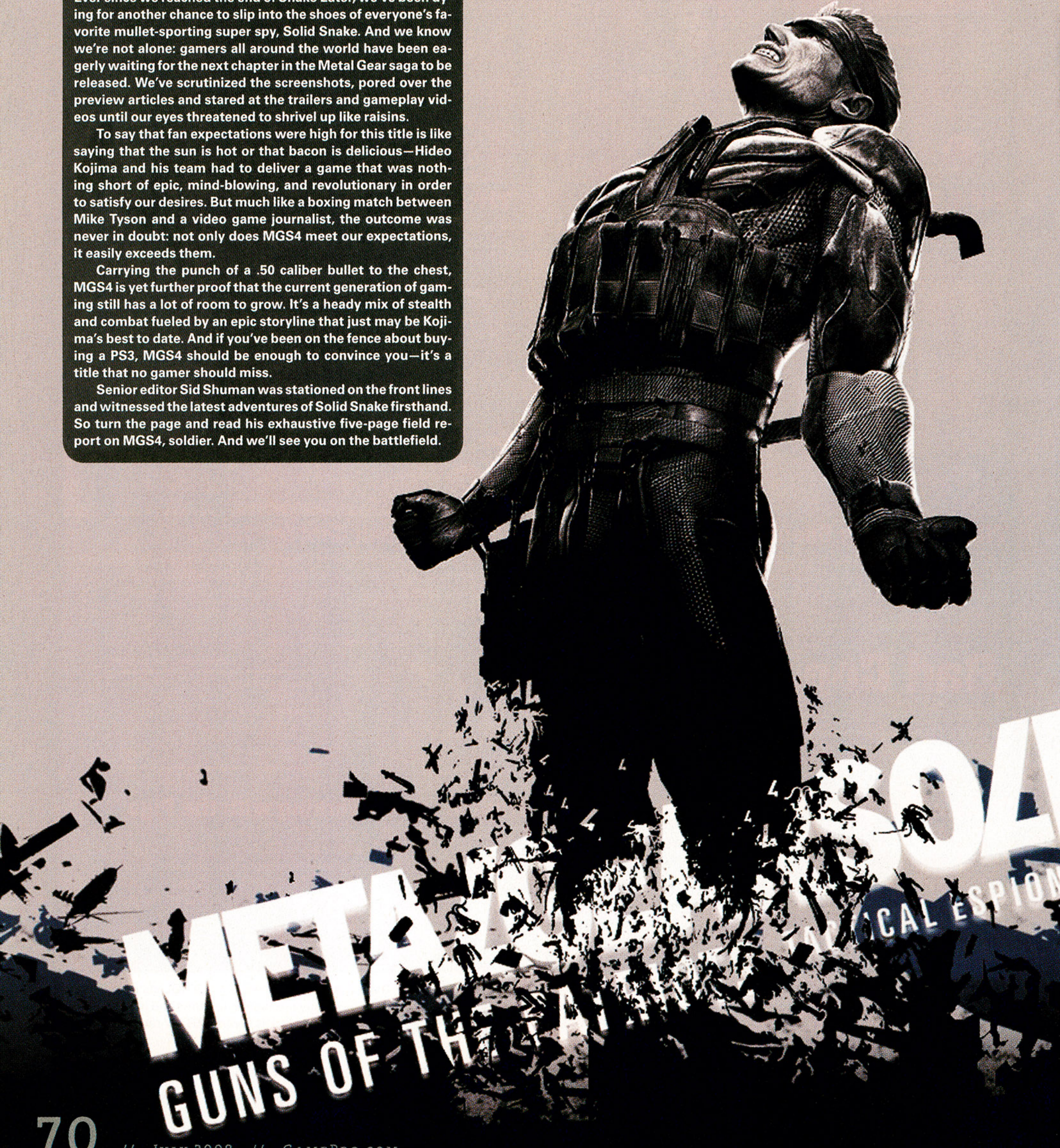
METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

Ever since we reached the end of Snake Eater, we've been dying for another chance to slip into the shoes of everyone's favorite mullet-sporting super spy, Solid Snake. And we know we're not alone: gamers all around the world have been eagerly waiting for the next chapter in the Metal Gear saga to be released. We've scrutinized the screenshots, pored over the preview articles and stared at the trailers and gameplay videos until our eyes threatened to shrivel up like raisins.

To say that fan expectations were high for this title is like saying that the sun is hot or that bacon is delicious—Hideo Kojima and his team had to deliver a game that was nothing short of epic, mind-blowing, and revolutionary in order to satisfy our desires. But much like a boxing match between Mike Tyson and a video game journalist, the outcome was never in doubt: not only does MGS4 meet our expectations, it easily exceeds them.

Carrying the punch of a .50 caliber bullet to the chest, MGS4 is yet further proof that the current generation of gaming still has a lot of room to grow. It's a heady mix of stealth and combat fueled by an epic storyline that just may be Kojima's best to date. And if you've been on the fence about buying a PS3, MGS4 should be enough to convince you—it's a title that no gamer should miss.

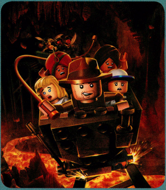
Senior editor Sid Shuman was stationed on the front lines and witnessed the latest adventures of Solid Snake firsthand. So turn the page and read his exhaustive five-page field report on MGS4, soldier. And we'll see you on the battlefield.



GAME REVIEWS:

Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo's Dungeon (Wii) 83
Final Fantasy Tactics A2: Grimoire of the Rift (DS) 82
Hellboy: The Science of Evil (PS3) 77
Jake Hunter: Detective Chronicles (DS) 84
LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures (Xbox 360) .. 78
Mega Man Star Force 2 (DS) 83
Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots (PS3) 72
Wii Fit (Wii) 80

LEGO INDIANA JONES: THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES



Another month, another tough decision: much like our June issue, which featured a showdown between two heavyweight titles—Grand Theft Auto IV and Mario Kart Wii—this month we had to choose between the sublime Metal Gear Solid 4 and the supremely charming LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures. The "hardcore" among you might scoff and wonder what the big deal was: clearly, MGS4 was the better game, right?

Wrong! LEGO Indy may not have the "hardcore" cachet of MGS4 but it's still an amazing game in its own right. In the end, we awarded the Game of the Month honors to Snake, but LEGO Indy tenaciously stuck around until the very end; it truly is a game worthy of the consideration.

It's a ridiculously fun title that we thoroughly enjoyed and we can't recommend it enough; much like LEGO *Star Wars*, we're certain it'll appeal to any gamer who gives it a fair chance. And it's also the perfect way to get yourself geeked up for the new *Indiana Jones* movie as well. Of course, much like last month, we suggest you buy both MGS4 and LEGO Indy—just apologize to your friends and family in advance for ignoring them, okay?

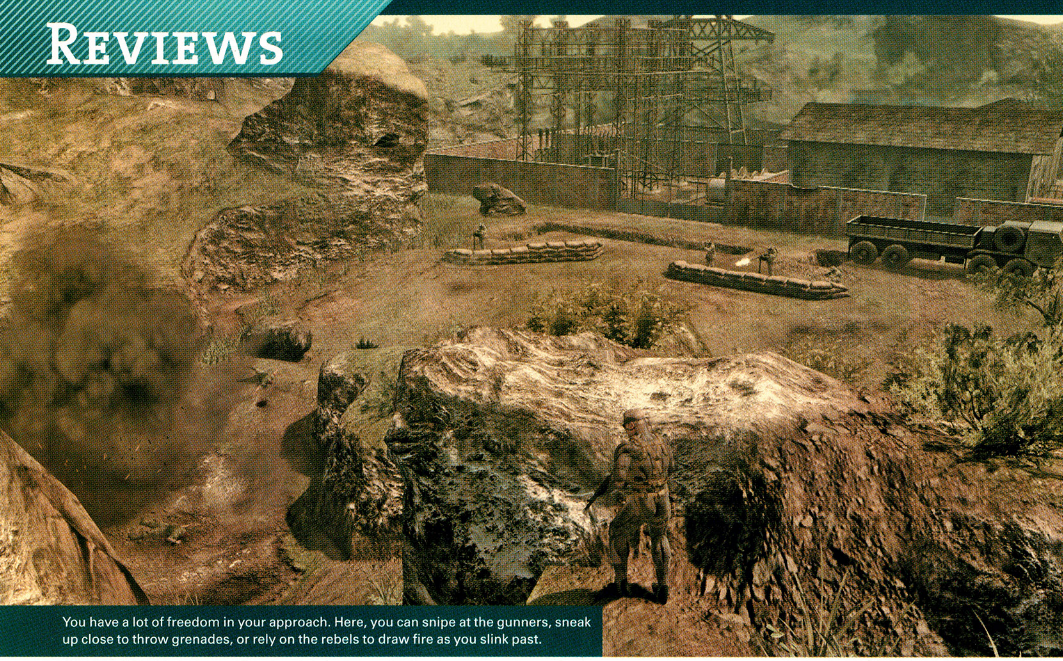
GAMEPRO'S RATING SCALE

Behind the numbers:

5.00–4.50	The best of the best. If you don't own this game, you should. Think Halo, Zelda, Resident Evil, and Metal Gear Solid.
4.25–3.50	Highly enjoyable, but falls short of true greatness. The Fight Nights and Tony Hawks of the world.
3.25–2.50	Approach with caution—try before you buy. Enter the Matrix and the Dynasty Warriors games fall squarely in this category.
2.25–1.50	Should come with a sticker: "Warning, contains poisonous amounts of suckage." Remember Backyard Wrestling?
1.25–0.00	An absolute insult to humanity. Kill it with fire and holy water.

GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE

Games that score 4.50 or higher are awarded our coveted Editors' Choice Award.



You have a lot of freedom in your approach. Here, you can snipe at the gunners, sneak up close to throw grenades, or rely on the rebels to draw fire as you slink past.

METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

It is, without a doubt, one of the greatest games of all time

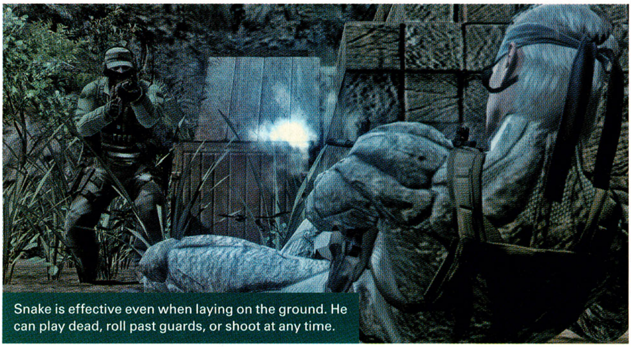
GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE

PS3 **ESRB: M**

■ Developer: Kojima Productions ■ Publisher: Konami

Every once in a long while, a game will come along and change all the rules. Final Fantasy VII transformed the RPG genre, Resident Evil helped create a new sub-category of gaming—survival horror—and Grand Theft Auto III single-handedly reshaped the gaming landscape. And now comes Metal Gear Solid 4, a game whose potential influence on the current state of gaming is nothing short of tectonic.

It represents an artistic triumph for its director, game design legend Hideo Kojima, as well as an enormous coup for Sony and its PlayStation 3. Metal Gear Solid 4 is a masterpiece, an unforgettable game that shines like a beacon amidst a sea of mediocrity. It is not only the best Metal Gear game, but one of the best games ever made, period. If you own a PS3, put this at the top of your to-buy list and if you don't own a PS3, well, chances are you will buy one soon just to play this game.

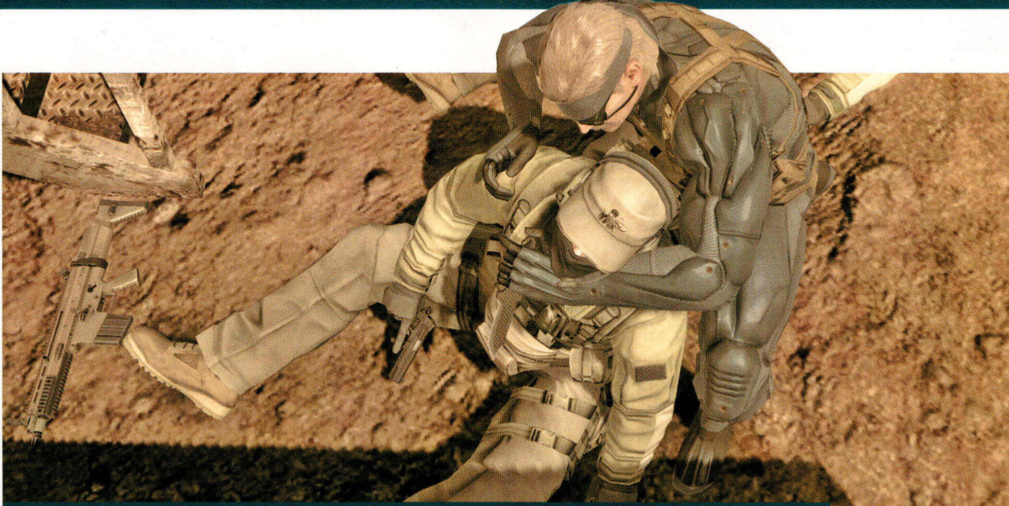


Snake is effective even when laying on the ground. He can play dead, roll past guards, or shoot at any time.

LONG TIME NO SEE

One of Metal Gear Solid 4's chief pleasures is its sweeping story line, a tale that redefines the term "epic" yet remains grounded by its intensely personal, human side. If you're new to the Metal Gear Solid series, don't worry: MGS4 takes great pains to tell an accessible story that will enthrall newcomers while providing plenty of surprises for hardcore series veterans.

In many ways, MGS4 is the true sequel to 1998's groundbreaking Metal Gear Solid. The game shifts the focus back to Solid Snake, a legendary stealth operative and hardened combat veteran. But these days, things are different—Snake is dying, ravaged by a case of premature aging that's resulted as a side effect of his modified DNA. Not only has the condition taken a toll on his abilities but on his confidence as well.

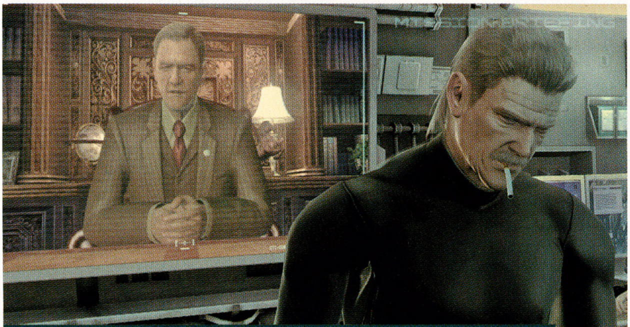


Close-quarters combat (CQC) maneuvers are the "expert" moves in the game, and they're loads of fun. You can slit your enemy's throat, slam him to the ground, or silently choke him out. Practice them at any time by accessing Virtual Training in the Start menu.

The masterful storytelling portrays Snake as a tragic yet noble figure who grows increasingly disillusioned as the world crumbles around him. Snake isn't depicted as a one-dimensional superhero in MGS4, but as an old man who's grown exasperated with the harsh realities of war. This stylistic shift gives the game some serious emotional weight—it's impossible not to be touched by Snake's dilemma.

As he stares his own mortality in the face, players are forced to do the same. This game explores some heavy issues: death, aging, war, terrorism, and even the role of the U.S. military. Even more surprising is that it handles these themes without heavy-handed preaching or grandstanding. This is remarkable stuff, particularly for a video game. Atmosphere is also a strength of MGS4: From its opening moments to the final scenes, the game paints a grim world that's at the mercy of an out-of-control war economy, a ruthless form of capitalism that thrives on bloodshed and weapons dealing.

Snake's journey to the Middle East starts out as a simple assassination mission, but quickly evolves into a far more personal quest. Past games in the series have been rightfully criticized for their ridiculously long cinematic cut-scenes and self-indulgent speeches. Luckily, Kojima has learned his lesson. The cinemas in Metal Gear Solid 4 are utterly magnetic and, with only one or two exceptions, devoid of the bewildering and bloated lectures that weighed down the earlier games. The voice acting is also powerful, with one exception (you know who you are), and it succeeds in sucking you deeper and deeper into the game's colorful cast of characters. In particular, David Hayter's role as the gravel-throated Solid Snake is a performance for the ages. This is video game storytelling at its absolute best, and represents a new high watermark for the craft, easily surpassing the superb BioShock and the subversive Grand Theft Auto IV.



The cinemas can be long-winded at times, but are a vast improvement over previous Metal Gear Solid games. Overall, MGS4's cinemas are among the best ever created.

WAR HAS CHANGED

First, erase all expectations of what you think Metal Gear is and how it plays. Kojima and company have gone back to the drawing board to craft a radically improved interface, and the result feels like a mix of Gears of War and Call of Duty 4, with a dash of classic Metal Gear stealth for flavor. This is an intense action game, but you'll need to think fast and stay cool to survive.

The beauty of MGS4's gameplay is that it gives the player options. As in the other Metal Gear games, you'll be charged with infiltrating heavily defended enemy installations and the method you use is entirely up to you. You can choose the direct approach (shoot first, hide later), the indirect (hide always, shoot when you must), and everything in between. There's literally no "wrong" way to play MGS4, though some tactics are harder than others. If you want to play the game as a Gears of War-style shooter, prepare yourself for one of the best shooters you've ever played. If you'd rather creep and crawl to avoid enemies as in the earlier Metal Gear games, you'll be overjoyed by the game's tactical depth.

The game's masterstroke lies in Snake's octo-camo armor, an active camouflage suit that mimics Snake's surroundings. Octo-camo makes basic hiding and sneaking an automatic affair, and lets trigger-happy players focus on the action while still maintaining a semblance of stealth. Kojima deserves major credit for updating the classic Metal Gear gameplay with so many modern elements, from the over-the-shoulder aiming style to the optional first-person camera, and integrating them seamlessly with a control scheme that's simple yet deep. To play the core of the game, you only need to use four main buttons: aim, shoot, crawl, and use. That the game squeezes so much functionality out of such a simple interface is one of its crowning achievements.

CONTINUED ▶

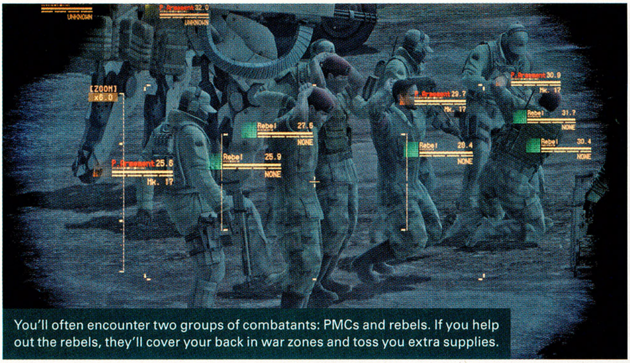
The octo-camo suit keeps the stealth simple, enabling you to hide from enemies even in plain sight. Alternately, you can go for the Rambo approach…just be ready for a tougher fight.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

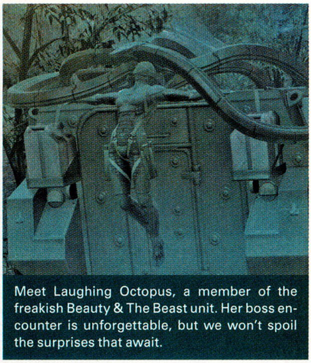
Of course, no Metal Gear game would be complete without an array of memorable boss battles, and even here MGS4 surpasses the loftiest expectations. The chief villain is Solid Snake's brother, Liquid Snake, who is residing in the body of another classic foe, Revolver Ocelot. But the most prominent boss battles are between Snake and The Beauty & The Beast Unit, a squad of grotesque cyborg abominations who are more than they first seem. You'll need more than raw firepower to take out these metal-clad monsters, and each battle plays out in entirely unique, unexpected ways; thankfully, the element of frustration that plagued past MGS boss fights have been eliminated. By the end of the game, the boss battles become so epic and so shocking in nature that you'll literally be pumping your fist in the air, wide-eyed and delighted by the spectacle. These are the moments that will have Hollywood directors like Michael Bay shifting uncomfortably in their seats. Why watch the latest big-budget action movie when you can play a game as powerful as this?

If the core shooting and sneaking is the steak of MGS4, then the weapon customization is the gravy. Kojima is a reputed Pokémon addict who has reportedly collected every Pokémon in every game ever, and you can see that influence extend to MGS4's extensive suite of weapons. There are over 70 guns in the game, from non-lethal tranquilizer pistols to grenade launchers and double-barrel shotguns; some are literally handed to you, others are hidden, and still more are scooped off of enemies or unlocked at the end of the game. In the first act, you meet a weapons launderer who will supply Snake with high-end firearms and ammo—for a price, of course.

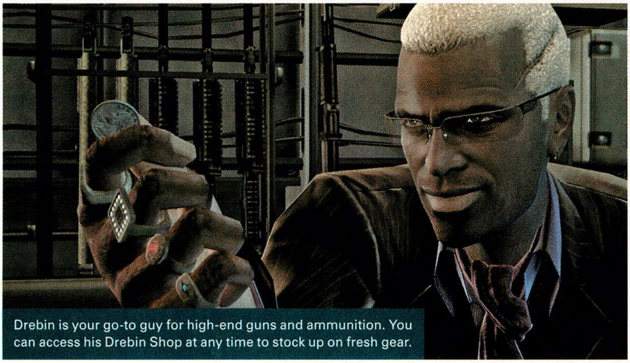
Metal Gear Solid 4 renders some of the finest-looking graphics ever seen. Its visual variety is a major high point—just wait until you see some of the later acts.



You'll often encounter two groups of combatants: PMCs and rebels. If you help out the rebels, they'll cover your back in war zones and toss you extra supplies.



Meet Laughing Octopus, a member of the freakish Beauty & The Beast unit. Her boss encounter is unforgettable, but we won't spoil the surprises that await.



Drebin is your go-to guy for high-end guns and ammunition. You can access his Drebin Shop at any time to stock up on fresh gear.

In order to purchase these exotic weapons, you'll need to scoop up the fallen guns of enemies and allies and cash them in for "Drebin Points." But it doesn't end with weapons. You can buy dozens of modifications, from laser sights and flashlights to under-barrel grenade launchers and recoil-control grips. This weapon customization system is brilliant for two reasons. First, it allows you to convert sub-par firearms into more specialized weapons, such as adding a rifle scope and silencer to a stock MK17 carbine to create a silent sniper rifle. Second, it encourages you to replay the game again and again—not that you need to be encouraged—in order to unlock the highest-end weapons that cost literally millions of Drebin Points. Even scooping weapons off of fallen enemies is addictive, and it's often tempting to dart out of cover to grab nearby guns, although that's not a good idea if you're planning a stealthy approach!

RAISING HELL WITH CELL

But as impressive as MGS4 is on a gameplay level, it's also quite amazing on a purely technical one as well. MGS4 is one of the most visually striking games ever released, and also the first game to show off the hidden power of the PlayStation 3. Technically speaking, the game is a marvel of production. Artistically speaking, it's a triumph.

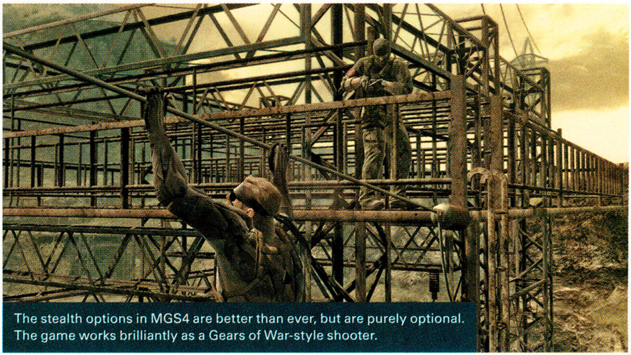
You won't need an HDTV to appreciate the game, either. Kojima has always famously downplayed the importance of hi-def visuals, once telling me that he wasn't interested in HD because he prefers a "dirtier" look, which he feels gives his games a lively atmosphere. This is probably why MGS4 goes in the complete opposite direction of other new-gen games whose graphics are almost too "clean."

The world of MGS4 is smeared with dust, soot, and grime, giving the game a rich, tactile texture that plays well on even standard definition TVs. Color is also used to great effect, with post-production filters that saturate the game in deep greys, greens, and golds. This is a visually striking game, even if you're stuck with a standard-def TV.

But if you have access to an HDTV, MGS4 will show you the bleeding edge of video game graphics. Leveraging the power of the PlayStation 3's octopus-like Cell processor, MGS4 renders some absolutely phenomenal environments. The first act takes place in the dusty slums of the Middle East, and the second act moves to the sweltering jungles of South America. Visual variety is a hallmark here, and thanks to Snake's globetrotting journey, the game never repeats the same look twice. The environments are not only shockingly detailed, but also massive in scope: when you see the soaring peaks of South America, you'll swear you're watching film footage. MGS4 has that effect on players, effectively blurring, if not erasing, the line that divides games and cinema. It's an absolutely remarkable achievement.

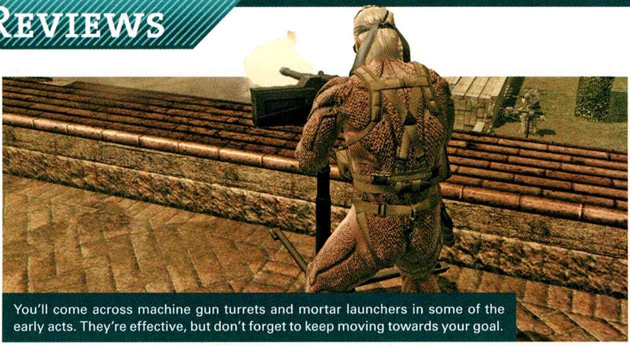
FULL MOTION VIDEO

Even more impressive are the game's characters, which are modeled after real-life actors and animated by motion-capture techniques

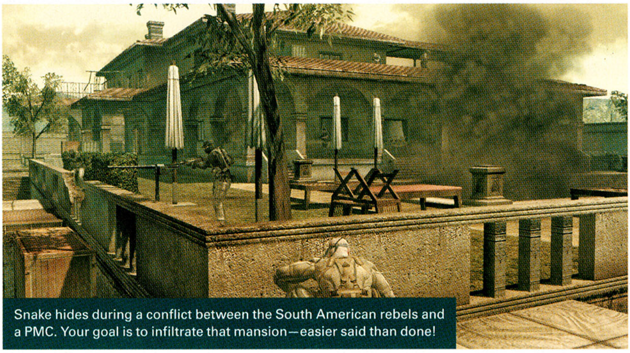


The stealth options in MGS4 are better than ever, but are purely optional. The game works brilliantly as a Gears of War-style shooter.

CONTINUED ▶



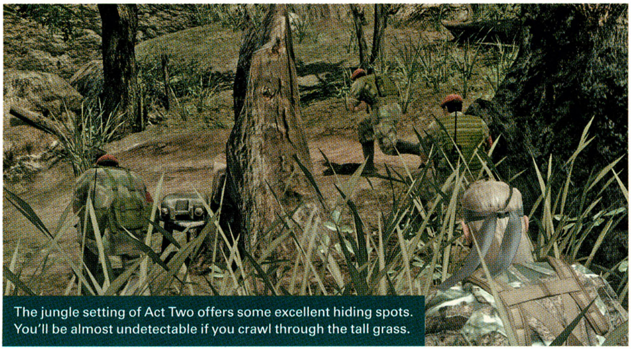
You'll come across machine gun turrets and mortar launchers in some of the early acts. They're effective, but don't forget to keep moving towards your goal.



Snake hides during a conflict between the South American rebels and a PMC. Your goal is to infiltrate that mansion—easier said than done!

for an intensely realistic look. The facial expressions are particularly extraordinary because they manage to convey meaningful emotions beyond just rage and fear. Seeing MGS4's characters in action, you'll be struck by how empty, soulless, and one-dimensional most game characters really are. If you want to know exactly what the game looks like, head to GamePro.com, or any other gaming site, and watch some of the trailer videos. Kojima has fooled us again: These aren't pre-rendered movies, as many had assumed, but in-game assets running in real time. The game just looks sensational.

Another new PlayStation 3 technology, Blu-ray disc, has proven to be an enormous asset in MGS4. The massive 50GB of data storage means that the developers were free to create as much content as they wanted, without any compromise in quality or quantity. This storage advantage is particularly evident in the game's striking use of audio. Mastered by Skywalker Sound, the experts behind George Lucas's *Star Wars* films, the in-game audio is endlessly varied: it paints a rich sonic palette that heightens the intensity of the action and the emotional resonance of the story line. Gunshots sound eerily realistic, explosions rumble with low-frequency reverberations, and wildlife chitters nervously in the background. It's a feast for the ears and, like so much of MGS4, a new high watermark.



The jungle setting of Act Two offers some excellent hiding spots. You'll be almost undetectable if you crawl through the tall grass.

The soundtrack also deserves special mention. From the opening title screen to the end credits, MGS4's masterful score represents another soaring success. MGS4's soundtrack stirs up your emotions with ease, from passion to excitement to regret. The spine-tingly, mournful "Love Theme" is a particular standout here, but everything from the battle anthems to the cinematic score is simple phenomenal. This is one soundtrack you won't soon forget—here's hoping it ends up on iTunes sooner rather than later.

BATTLE FATIGUE?

For all its polish, MGS4 has one or two minor blemishes. A new feature called "Stress" isn't explained clearly enough. Here's how it works: intense combat or extreme conditions will raise Snake's Stress level, which negatively affects his "Psyche" meter, which in turn reduces his healing rate and weapon accuracy. The confusion regarding Stress and Psyche is a minor issue, though, and their relationship becomes more apparent as you progress through the game. And in the end, Stress and Psyche are interesting ways to help you bond with Snake's emotional condition in any given scenario.

Another small shortcoming is that MGS4 doesn't include a true tutorial or training mission, which would have been a wise choice as Snake has a large repertoire of maneuvers. First-time players will want to pull up the "Briefing" menu to get acquainted with the controls, though the basic shooting and moving is self-explanatory. You'll also spend a good deal of time poking through your inventory in the middle of boss battles and protracted firefights, which can occasionally disrupt the dramatic flow. These are tiny, almost inconsequential quibbles, however, in an otherwise flawless game.

WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL

There's not much else to say beyond that. Metal Gear Solid 4 is a brilliant, moving, exciting, intense action game that succeeds hugely at everything it sets out to do. It sets new standards for graphics, sound, gameplay, and storytelling, and it may be years before it is equaled, let alone surpassed. You will not play a better game this year—maybe even this decade. If you own a PS3, buy this game the day it comes out. And if you don't own a PS3, well, you better start saving your nickels and dimes.

In the end, everyone's a winner. The PlayStation 3 finally gets its "savior," Kojima gets his masterpiece, and gamers get one of the best games of all time. And they all lived happily ever after.
—Sid Shuman

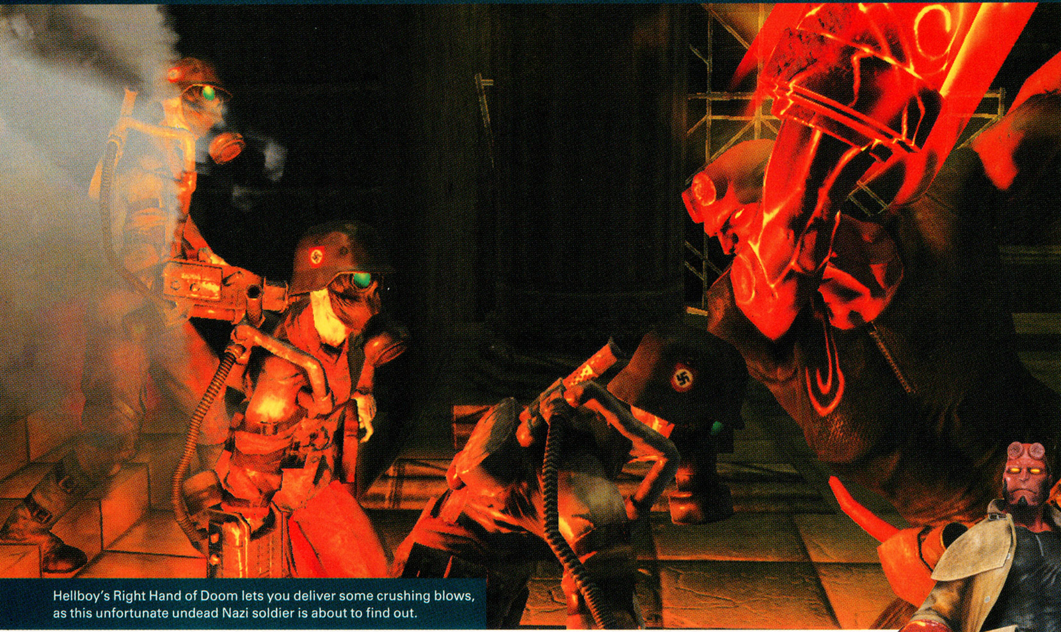
KTFV
Get the link to **Metal Gear Solid 4** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text **KTFV** to **59479**
Only standard text messaging rates apply

FUN FACTOR

5.00
OUT OF 5.00

PROS: One of the greatest games ever created; it satisfies in almost every way possible.

CONS: "Stress" concept is initially hard to grasp; a tutorial for newcomers would have been appreciated.



Hellboy's Right Hand of Doom lets you deliver some crushing blows, as this unfortunate undead Nazi soldier is about to find out.

HELLBOY: THE SCIENCE OF EVIL

A video game worthy of the devilishly good comic book that inspired it.

PS3 **ESRB: T**

■ Developer: Krome Studios ■ Publisher: Konami

Hellboy: The Science of Evil sort of reminded me of God of War: it puts you in the shoes of a tough-talking badass, pits you against hordes of supernatural baddies and arms you with the weapons you need to basically kick the living crap out them. But don't think Hellboy is just Kratos-Lite: he's got a style and charm all his own.

THE UPPER HAND

The basic gist of The Science of Evil's gameplay is this: Armed with a revolver and his Right Hand of Doom, Hellboy punches and smashes his way through various levels with very little in the way of puzzle solving or platforming to distract him. You have access to some pretty cool moves but if you're the sort who'd rather mash buttons, you can get by without too much problem. Of course, if you take the time to master the combat, you'll pull off some awesome combos. There's also a ton of scenery to destroy and cool little interactive touches like tossing back your enemy's grenades to keep you busy.

The game's story is also strong, which is a testament to the strength of the source material: Herman von Klempt, a villain from the Hellboy comic book, has world domination on the brain and it's up to Hellboy and the Bureau of Paranormal Research and Defense to thwart his plan. Adding a nice counterpoint to Hellboy's gruff nature are playable characters such as Abe Sapien and Liz Sherman; also adding to the narrative's charm is the strong level design and great sense of atmosphere that infects each level.

WEIRD SCIENCE

Unfortunately, The Science of Evil suffers from a few problems that keep it from being a standout title. The game's camera, for one, works well most of the time but it sometimes creates blind spots that really left me gritting my teeth. And while the look and feel of this game is pretty impressive, the gameplay lacks any sense of imagination: You basically go from point A to B, stopping only to beat the hell out of whatever comes your way.

Also, for a game that relies so heavily on combat, you'd think they would have spent more time fine-tuning the controls. They're intuitive enough but they weren't as responsive as they should have been; consistency was also an issue as I could pull off certain actions flawlessly in one instance and struggle to get them off in another.

AS GOOD AS IT GETS

Okay, so The Science of Evil isn't going to reinvent the face of gaming or make you say "God of War what?" But really, who cares? It's a solid and enjoyable title with enough action and plot to keep you interested over the long haul. Even if you don't like the comics or care about the upcoming movie, there are worse ways to spend a couple of hours. And who knows: you may even end up liking the big red guy enough to go check out his other adventures. —**Andrew Gori**

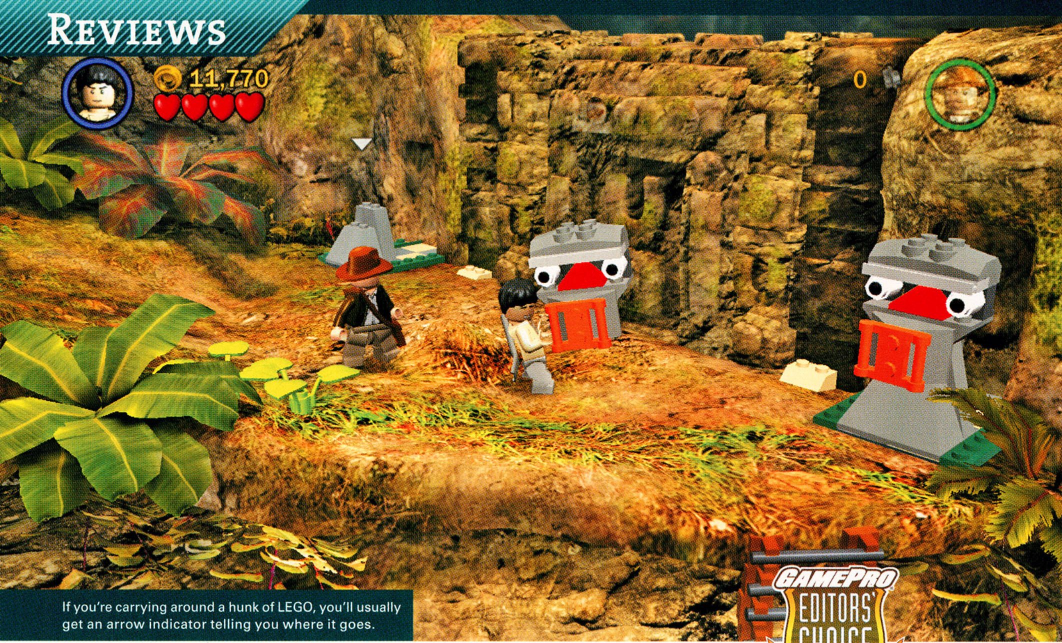
FUN FACTOR

4.00

OUT OF 5.00

PROS: Good mix of horror and humor; tons of action; level design and atmosphere are great.

CONS: Repetitive gameplay; controls could use a bit of refinement.



If you're carrying around a hunk of LEGO, you'll usually get an arrow indicator telling you where it goes.

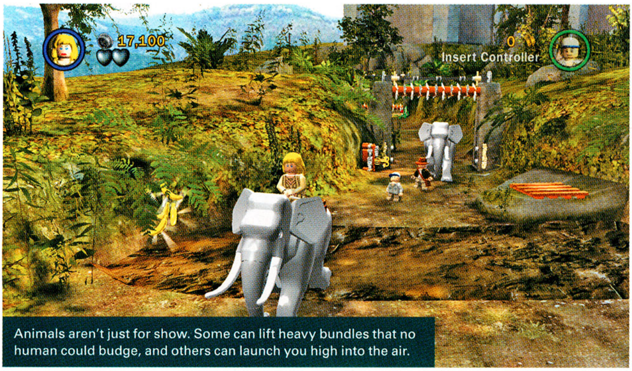
LEGO INDIANA JONES: THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES

Indy might be getting a little long in the tooth, but his inner child's alive and well.

Xbox 360 **ESRB: E 10+**

■ Developer: Traveller's Tales ■ Publisher: LucasArts

There's no doubting the fact that LEGO *Star Wars* was a stroke of genius. It was a brilliant and inspired marriage of two well established properties that perfectly complimented each other, in the same way that chocolate goes with peanut butter and bacon goes with, well, everything. Now, the block-obsessed geniuses at Traveller's Tales are back to give another iconic Lucas franchise the LEGO treatment, and the end result is game that delivers almost everything a diehard Indiana Jones fan could have hoped for.

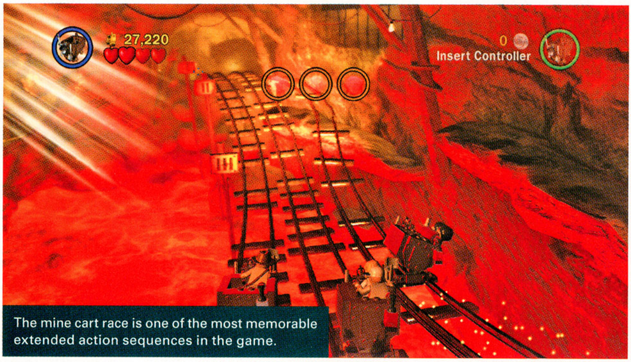


Animals aren't just for show. Some can lift heavy bundles that no human could budge, and others can launch you high into the air.

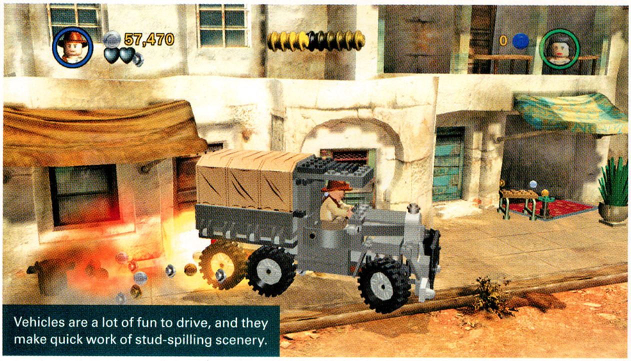
YOUNG AT HEART

Movie-making powerhouse George Lucas has created some memorable characters in his time and surely, part-time archaeology professor and full-time adventurer Indiana Jones ranks right up there as one of his greatest creations. The rough and tumble academic was larger than life and yet, somehow accessible. And just like the cast of *Star Wars*, Indy retains all of his charm in the transformation from a silver-screen legend to a pint-sized LEGO mini figure. If anything, his appeal is actually amplified as every mannerism and expression is wonderfully exaggerated. Don't let the sense of wide-eyed innocence fool you, though: to dismiss this beautifully constructed game as mere child's play would be a grave error. This is one of those rare games that adults can comfortably play with their kids—or in their absence—without feeling like their brains are slowly turning to mush.

Each of the original films gets six missions culled from the series' most spectacular sequences and memorable set-pieces, and Barnett College serves as your base of operations once you've escaped the spear-throwing natives of the Lost Temple. *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Temple of Doom*, and *Last Crusade* are represented by wall-mounted maps that trace your exploits in bold red



The mine cart race is one of the most memorable extended action sequences in the game.



Vehicles are a lot of fun to drive, and they make quick work of stud-spilling scenery.

travel lines instead of stale load screens, so you can dive right into your favorite movie and its varied locales almost immediately.

TEAM WORK

Of course, unlike the real Indy, who was a bit of a lone wolf, you don't have to strike out on your blocky adventures alone. Whether you're exploring the treacherous lava-filled caverns of the Temple of Kali or busting your father out of an ancient castle, you'll always have a partner to lend a hand. Working cooperatively is a hallmark of the game's design and each level has plenty of opportunities for you to coordinate your actions. These secondary characters are also rendered with just as much character and personality as the main star and it really is a joy to witness the subtle touches that the developers have added in, such as the elder Jones's habit of clutching his aching back after lifting something heavy.

This attention to detail is also present in the overall design of the world. From swiping an idol in South America to identifying the Holy Grail, the world of danger and mysticism these characters inhabit is converted to LEGO blocks with obsessive and imaginative care. The levels follow the events of the movie but rather than faithfully recreate each scene, Traveller's Tales took a lot of liberties, injecting the in-game depictions with a welcome dose of creativity and humor. You never know whether the next area will involve brawling with thugs on top of speeding trucks, playing bumper-boats in the canals of Venice, or tearing apart the largest and most wide open LEGO levels yet seen in search of a single missing piece.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Every character also has a unique talent or the ability to wield particular tools and weapons; skills which you'll need to explore confined passages, translate hieroglyphics, blow up special silver pieces, or appease ancient idols. Some now have phobias, too: Indy goes weak-kneed around snakes and Willie can't hang with spiders. These psychological obstacles just add another appealing layer to the long sequence of enigmas you'll encounter, even if a handful might try your patience more than your intellect.

Puzzles too often require you to break everything in sight simply to see all the raw pieces arbitrarily hidden inside, but it's hard to give such a flaw much weight when even the most repetitive elements of play remain satisfying after hours on end. On the other hand, it's more than a little aggravating to slide off the edge of a cliff immediately after respawning, or micromanaging a partner that temporarily refuses to follow you, but such frustrations are never frequent enough to become exasperating.

DIGGING DEEPER

Most gamers can complete the story mode in about 10 hours, but this is just the start of LEGO Indiana Jones offering. The world is overflowing with hidden nooks and crannies, optional collectibles, and amusing references. Once you've completed a mission, it becomes available for "free play" mode, which lets characters shape-shift between a larger collection of mini figures with the push of a button. If you find all 10 artifact pieces hidden in each level or discover all of the concealed packages of power, you'll need to retrace your steps and solve the shrewdly intricate puzzles you lacked the requisite items to assail the first time through.

LEGO Indiana Jones isn't without its flaws—the lack of online co-op is almost criminal—but it so beautifully mixes the spirit of a beloved adventure series with the playful heart of cherished childhood toys that it feels like much more than the sum of its angular parts. The tone might be almost overwhelmingly saccharine sweet, with even the caricature Nazis of the films stripped of their insignia and leering malice, but all gamers, young or old, are virtually guaranteed a great time.

—Cameron Lewis

FUN FACTOR

4.50

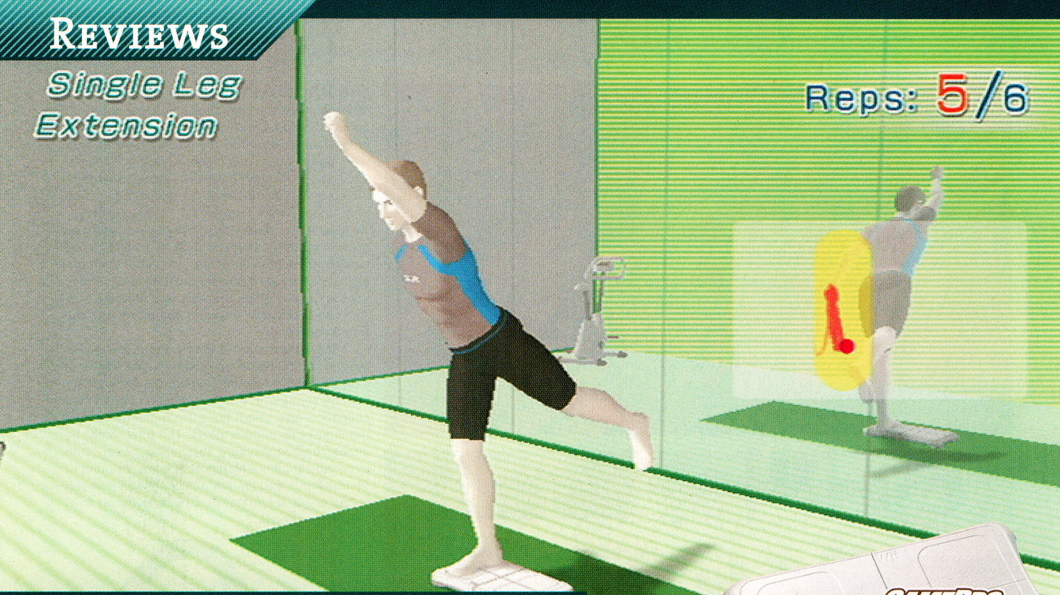
OUT OF 5.00

PROS: Incredibly charming personality, challenging and creative puzzles, tons of collectibles and secret areas, and great music.

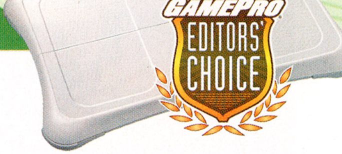
CONS: Minor respawn and ally A.I. issues; no online co-op mode is a huge shame.

FDBK Get the link to **LEGO Indiana Jones** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text **ATKU** to **59479**

Only standard text messaging rates apply



Mini-games aside, there are actual exercises in Wii Fit like the single-leg extension. They won't make you buff but any type of physical movement can be beneficial.



Wii FIT

It won't turn your flab into muscles but it will get you up off your butt.

Wii **ESRB: E**

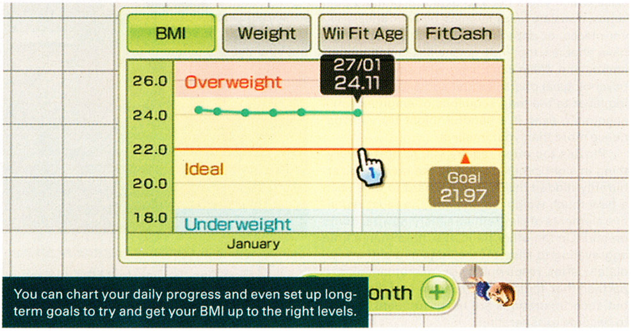
Developer and Publisher: Nintendo

Alright, let's just get this out of the way: Wii Fit isn't going to give you the muscles of Schwarzenegger or give you the subtle grace of Baryshnikov. In short, if you go in spaghetti-armed and uncoordinated, you'll probably come out that way. Much like Brain Age and other games of its ilk, Wii Fit isn't a magic bullet that'll cure what ails you. But what it can do is get you up and off your couch, which, if you're anything like me, is a good thing all around. Oh, and it's a heck of lot of fun to boot.

FIT TO BE SQUARE

Playing Wii Fit is an interesting experience. It's sort of goofy and embarrassing—if you consider yourself "hardcore" you'll probably turn your nose up at it—but it can also be ridiculously fun. Of course, the best thing that Wii Fit has going for it is that it's unique. Much like the Wii Remote's motion sensing capabilities, the Balance Board offers you a gaming experience that you can't really find anywhere else. Sure, weight-sensing peripherals aren't anything new but unlike the flimsy mats of yore, the Balance Board feels less like a gimmick and more like a legitimate product. It's slick, responsive, and solidly made.

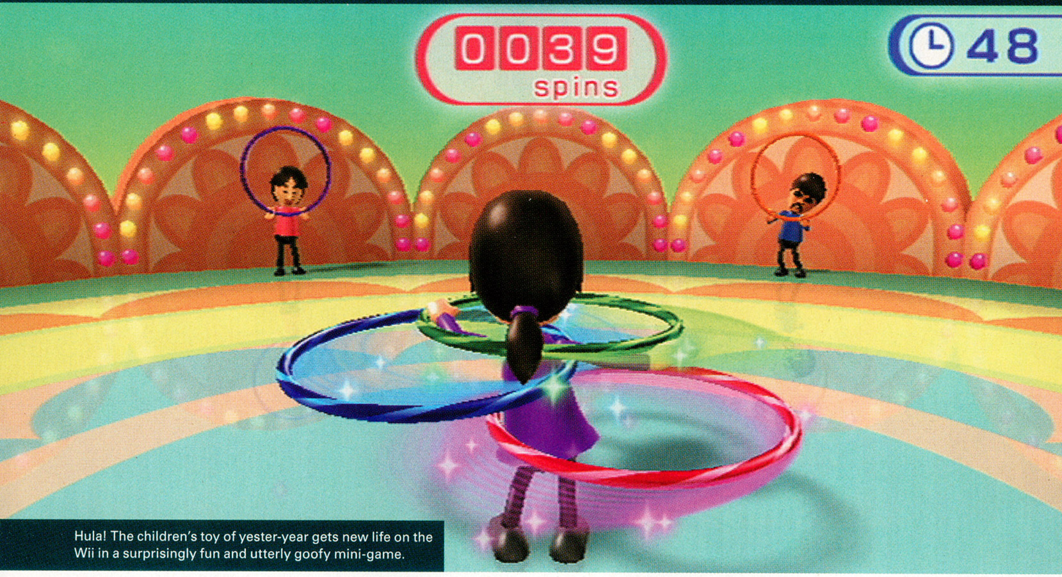
And just like Wii Sports was the perfect showcase for the Wii Remote's capabilities, Wii Fit pairs up with the Balance Board like peanut butter pairs up with jelly. The first time you log into Wii Fit, you create an account and go through a quick initial scanning process that measures your stance and weight. During my initial scan, I found out that I tended to over distribute my weight to the right and that my center of balance was shifted slightly to the back. My BMI (body mass index) was in the normal range but optimally, I needed to gain about fifteen pounds, which is a pretty nice goal to have. There's also a test that determines your relative Wii Fit age; I'm ashamed to admit that the game pegged me as being 15 years older than I really am the first time I took it, which was sort of discouraging.



You can chart your daily progress and even set up long-term goals to try and get your BMI up to the right levels.

FITNESS REGIMENT

Once you've gotten yourself scanned in, you can proceed to a menu of mini-games to mess around, take yourself to the Daily Training mode to engage in a daily set of exercises, or pull up menus to chart your progress. Most of your time with Wii Fit will no doubt be spent playing the mini-games, which are varied and place an emphasis on different things. There are games that require you to quickly shift your weight and games that require you to be more subtle with your movements.



Hula! The children's toy of yester-year gets new life on the Wii in a surprisingly fun and utterly goofy mini-game.

There are also a variety of yoga poses to help you stretch and strengthen specific parts of your body. As you play, you accrue time coins which you can cash in to unlock more content, which is a nifty way to motivate gamers to invest time with the exercises.

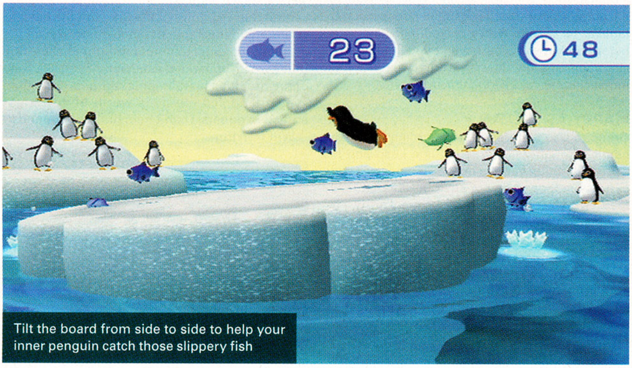
To be honest, none of the activities are particularly taxing—I didn't work up a sweat the way I would after, say, an hour on a stationary bike—but they can be invigorating. The yoga poses seemed especially beneficial and the mini-games were a fun and easy way to get my body moving.

Again, I'm under no delusions that Wii Fit is going to make me "healthy." It's absolutely not a replacement for a regular exercise routine, but if you are tenacious enough about it then Wii Fit could probably do a decent job of compensating for your lack of physical activity. On a personal note, after spending some time with the game, I was able to match my Wii Fit age to my actual age, which is something to be proud of, I suppose.

JUST FOR FUN

But that's beside the point because Wii Fit is also about having fun. It basically turns your entire body into a video-game controller and casual gamers who've bought into the Wii's user-friendly vibe will no doubt find things to like about it. "Hardcore" gamers will no doubt bash it as being a gimmick and yet another example that Nintendo is selling out, but that's just foolish: a great gaming experience is a great gaming experience, no matter what, and much like playing the drums in Rock Band, it's something all gamers should try at least once.

There are a few things I didn't like about the Wii Fit/Balance Board combo. First, the Board requires its own set of batteries, meaning you must have six batteries on hand—two for your Wii Remote, four for the Board. Second is price: at about $90, the entire package isn't cheap. There's also the question of future use—unless other developers take full advantage of the Balance Board, it could become another addition to the failed peripheral graveyard. But I'll eat a box of bran muffins if the people at Activision and EA aren't considering the device for use with the Wii versions of the next Tony Hawk and Skate games, and I'm sure other developers are taking a hard look at the device for possible uses as well.



Tilt the board from side to side to help your inner penguin catch those slippery fish

FITNESS FANATIC

I must admit I enjoyed my time with Wii Fit and the Balance Board. It isn't particularly deep, it offers up rather simplistic visuals that are on the level of Wii Sports, and it certainly didn't cut into the time I spent playing "real" games like GTAIV. It was a fun diversion, however, and I found myself returning to time and time again. It's further proof that Nintendo is committed to delivering unique and interesting gameplay experiences that challenge our notions of what makes a video game a video game.

If you are a Wii fanatic or are just looking to play a game that entertains as much as it innovates, then Wii Fit is right up your alley. And I'm going to encourage "hardcore" gamers to at least try it out before they bash the product as being a gimmick—believe it or not, you just might find yourselves having fun.—**Tae K. Kim**

BXMC Get the link to **Wii Fit** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text **BXMC** to **59479**

Only standard text messaging rates apply

FUN FACTOR

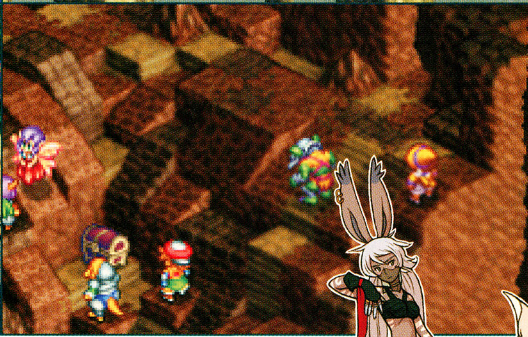
4.50
OUT OF 5.00

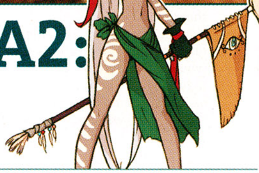
PROS: Offers up a unique and innovative gaming experience; Balance Board is solidly built.

CONS: Balance Board requires four batteries; price is high; might be too "unique" for some gamers.

HIT
100%
75pt(s)
Curaga
–

In Grimoire of the Rift, White Mages are invaluable assets on the battlefield—you never know when you're going to need some on-the-fly healing.





FINAL FANTASY TACTICS A2: GRIMOIRE OF THE RIFT

Square Enix strikes again with another addictive tactical RPG!

DS **ESRB: E10+**

Developer and Publisher: Square Enix

For some tactical RPG fans, the Final Fantasy Tactics series is about as good as it gets. The complex job system, multi-layered, hex-based gameplay, and compelling narratives have always been trademarks of the series; and the latest chapter, Final Fantasy Tactics A2: Grimoire of the Rift, continues the fine tradition set forth by its predecessors. It's an excellent title and one that's sure to keep your DS glued to your hands for a long time to come.

NEVERENDING STORY

Grimoire's interesting, if somewhat clichéd, narrative centers on a mischievous boy named Luso Clemens who finds himself thrust into the mysterious realm of Ivalice via a mystical book. Almost as soon as he arrives in this storybook world, Luso is taken in by the benevolent Gully Clan and in, typical Final Fantasy fashion, Luso gets embroiled in a grand adventure. The narrative isn't particularly great but it serves as a nice backdrop for the game's true strength—the tactical battles.

Battles are very similar to past Tactics titles, utilizing a three-dimensional playing field and relatively simple turn-based combat. Judges make their triumphant return, laying down specific laws before each battle—they may forbid ice attacks in one battle and decide that ranged attacks do extra damage in another. In exchange, you get to choose one Privilege, a power up that grants you a bonus, such as increased speed or damage, for the duration of the battle. It should prove instantly familiar to anyone who's played a Tactics game before and even if you haven't you'll get the basics soon enough. Just be warned that the finer intricacies can take a long time to master.

HAPPY AS A CLAN

Grimoire also features the extraordinary Clan dynamic through which you'll guide Luso and his cohorts through various quests and missions. It's extremely deep and very customizable—it really feels as if you are training a functional army. I really have to applaud Square Enix for the level of freedom that they allow the player. And talk about deep—with nearly 400 missions available, you'll have plenty to do during your time in Ivalice.

Of course, I did have a few issues with the game. I hated that I couldn't rotate or move the battlefield when planning my next strike, which really cut down on my strategic capabilities. Things also got problematic when the screen became overcrowded with units and scenery; the isometric view does a competent job of showing you the battlefield but the fixed perspective can lead to a lot of frustrations.

THE FINAL VERDICT

I admit that Grimoire of the Rift isn't the best installment in the Tactics franchise. However, it's certainly an entertaining and lighthearted title that's worth your time, especially if you liked any of the previous installments. With its deep Clan system and 400 missions worth of downright addictive quests, I can't help but recommend it.
—Will Herring

FUN FACTOR

4.00
OUT OF 5.00

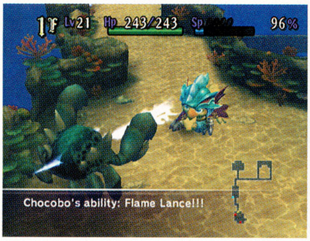
PROS: Deeply customizable Clan system; entertaining and addictive turn-based battles.

CONS: The story isn't that great; static battlefield camera hampers gameplay at times.

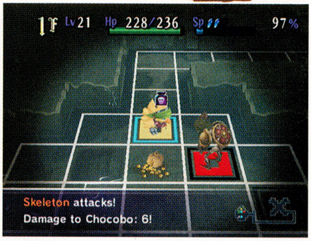
FINAL FANTASY FABLES: CHOCOBO'S DUNGEON

Wii **ESRB: E 10+**

■ Developer and Publisher: Square Enix

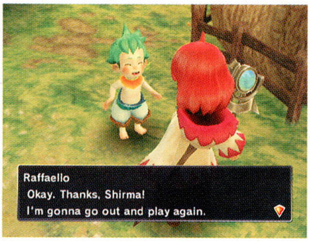


Chocobo's ability: Flame Lance!!!



Skeleton attacks!
Damage to Chocobo: 6!

Taking a basic run-of-the-mill dungeon crawler and adding the iconic Chocobos from the Final Fantasy RPG universe is a lot like taking an average sandwich and adding bacon: what was once a staid and ordinary item suddenly becomes a delicious treat. That's not to say that Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo's Dungeon is perfect—the gameplay is shallow and repetitive, for one—but despite its many faults, the game somehow manages to deliver its fair share of fun.



Raffaello
Okay. Thanks, Shirma!
I'm gonna go out and play again.

LASTING MEMORIES

One of the things that Chocobo's Dungeon does right is the story, which was one of the elements that kept me playing long after my patience for the game's faults had run out. The cute and cuddly Chocobo, along with series icon Cid, are mysteriously transported to Memoira, a land where memories are considered bad. Every night, when the town's bell chimes, the inhabitants of the land lose their memory, to start anew the next day. Through a bizarre twist of events that involve the appearance of a flying baby—it makes more sense in the game—Chocobo must enter the minds of his friends to retrieve their memories and set the land free from a hidden evil.

For the most part, the dungeons, or in this case, the minds of the towns in habitants, offer up an interesting set of battlegrounds to romp around in. Gameplay is a mix of tactical and turn based RPGs—the dungeons are laid out as grids, and characters can only complete one move per turn. This requires a lot of strategy on the part of the gamer, as you'll have to often plan ahead and plot carefully if you're to get to the end of the dungeon safely. Blindly charging down hallways usually leads to a quick death, so you have to plan carefully. Unfortunately, while the tactical component adds a nice layer, the rest of the gameplay elements feel rather basic.

A GAME OF CHICKEN

For the most part, I found myself getting through most battles simply by hitting one button, which really makes for a limited playing experience. There are other attacks and actions that you can use, but I seldom found that I needed anything beyond my standard attack. Chocobo's hunger meter is a nice twist that adds some variety to the otherwise one-note gameplay, however: You must keep his hunger under control or he will start losing HP, which adds just enough of a strategic wrinkle to keep you on your toes. There is also a blacksmith that Chocobo can go to in order to upgrade his weapons and armor; it's just too bad that Chocobo only has two real pieces of equipment that you need to manage.

As I said, Chocobo's Dungeon isn't perfect but it still manages to offer up enough fun to make you keep going. It may not be the robust adventure that loyal Final Fantasy fans are accustomed to, but it does offer an interesting dungeon crawl experience that series fans will no doubt enjoy hacking and slashing their way through.

—**Todd Melick**

FUN FACTOR

3.75

OUT OF 5.00

PROS: Graphics work nicely with an engaging story; interesting dungeon crawl experience.

CONS: Gameplay can get repetitive and shallow; hardcore FF fans may be disappointed.

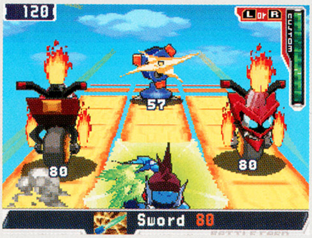
MEGA MAN STAR FORCE 2

DS **ESRB: E**

■ Developer and Publisher: Capcom

Star Force 2 takes place two months after the events of the first Star Force, but don't worry if you haven't played that game: SF2 does a good job of keeping you up to date, though it definitely helps if you've played the first one. I won't delve too deep into the details but let's just say it's wholesome and familiar, featuring as it does the standard themes of courage, bravery and doing what's right, like not jaywalking. There's also a decent amount of tutorial content available, so you never feel lost when it comes to the actually playing the game.

Gameplay wise, Star Force 2 has you running around the undersea Wave World, battling enemies and engaging in various activities such as skiing and deep-sea riddle-solving. Combat takes place on a battle grid and while it can be slow in the beginning, once you strengthen your deck with more powerful cards, battles become an interesting and engaging mix of shooting action, quick reflex dodging, and card management. Not only do you have to have fast fingers, but a nimble mind as well. Unfortunately, the numerous random encounter battles that you'll face cut into the fun.



Also worth noting is that there are two versions of the game available: Saurian and Ninja. Much like the various Pokemon titles, the two games are essentially the same but you'll have access to different powers depending on which you own. You'll also get goodies if you link up a friend who has the other version; it's a neat feature but really, unless you're a total Star Force obsessive, there's no real reason to buy both.

If you absolutely loved the Battle Network games or played the first Star Force to death, then this is probably a game that you'll want to look into—it's a solid title with a lot to offer. However, if you are just a passing fan, you'll probably want to think hard before making the investment.

—**Emily Balistrieri**

FUN FACTOR

3.25

OUT OF 5.00

PROS: Has a lot to offer to diehard fans of the Battle Network and Star Force series.

CONS: The same probably can't be said for non-fans.

Help BATMAN Contest
Win the all-new LEGO® Batman™ toy products!

LEGO BATMAN THE VIDEOGAME

Find all the hidden Jokers in GamePro
gamepro.com/LEGOBatman

No purchase necessary. Enter online at www.gamepro.com/LEGO Batman and follow the instructions. Please complete all information required on the entry form. If you are entering online and are under 13 years of age, you will be asked for a parent or legal guardian's email address so that we can let them know you are entering this sweepstakes. Limit one online entry per person. No other forms of entry will be accepted. Normal Internet access and usage charges imposed by your online service will apply. Sweepstakes open to legal U.S. residents only (excluding Puerto Rico). This offer is Void where prohibited, and is subject to all federal, state and local laws. Visit www.gamepro.com for complete Giveaway rules and Regulations.

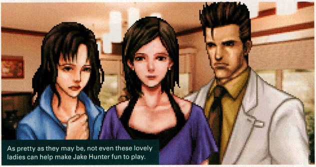
LEGO BATMAN: THE VIDEOGAME Software © 2008 TT Games Publishing Ltd. LEGO, the LEGO logo and the Minifigure are trademarks of the LEGO Group. © 2008 The LEGO Group. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

BATMAN and all related characters and elements are trademarks of and © DC Comics. WB SHIELD: ™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
(s08)

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB Visit www.esrb.org for rating information

JAKE HUNTER: DETECTIVE CHRONICLES

DS **ESRB: T** ■ Developer: Arc System Works ■ Publisher: Aksys Games

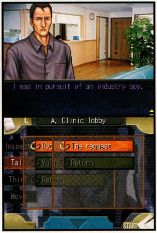


As pretty as they may be, not even these lovely ladies can help make Jake Hunter fun to play.

Everybody seems to immediately pin Jake Hunter as a Phoenix Wright rip-off but that's actually a disservice to both games. First, Jake Hunter is more of a noir private eye game that actually has more in common with the underrated DS title Hotel Dusk: Room 215. And secondly, Jake Hunter is nowhere near as fun as Phoenix Wright. Despite the stylized setting, old-school, adventure-based gameplay, and a jazzy soundtrack that's actually good, Jake Hunter crumbles under the weight of overly clichéd writing and a plot that ultimately fails to deliver.

HARD BOILED

Jake Hunter relies heavily on story and narrative, which is why it's so frustrating that the writing is so bad. It's stiff and fails to breathe any life into the characters that inhabit its dark and gritty world. Some of the dialogue reads as if it was ripped right out of a copy of *How To Write Noir For Dummies*. The cut-scenes also fail to impress, with sparse animations and stilted presentation.



I was in pursuit of an industry spy.

The game doesn't fare any better when it comes to actual gameplay. You spend your entire experience navigating menus—even action scenes are resolved through static menus. Imagine getting into a fight and having to choose your fighting moves from a list; this really robs the game of any sort of impact. The puzzle-solving and clue gathering elements are also poorly handled—unlike other adventure games, you never have to actually tap around an environment for clues. And while there are some "puzzles" scattered around, most of them barely qualify for that term. Worst yet, there is no penalty for getting something wrong, so rather than actually use your brain, you can just force your way through with random guessing.

OVER EASY

In fact, it's tempting to just call Jake Hunter a picture book with a couple of easy-peasy quizzes tossed in for variety's sake. It's an overly linear adventure game that doesn't offer much of a challenge; if, for some reason, you ever get lost, which is nearly impossible, all you have to do is hit the L button and you'll be transported to a "smoking" screen where Jake lights a cigarette and fills you in on what you're up to.

The worst part is that Jake Hunter had a lot of potential. The noir setting and the campy art style was a solid foundation and done right, the game could have been a great homage to the old-school adventure genre while also providing DS owners with an interesting gaming experience. Instead, Jake Hunter: Detective Chronicles fails to deliver on all counts; it's enough to make you want to scream out "Objection!"
—**Emily Balistrieri**

FUN FACTOR

1.75 OUT OF 5.00

PROS: The game's noir theme and overall art style are interesting.

CONS: The writing is dull and clichéd; super boring menu-based interface doesn't help.

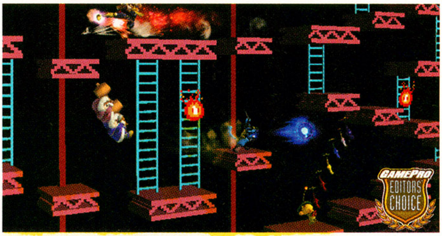
BIG LIST

GamePro reviews all the hottest new games as well as top current hits. For full reviews, trailers, screen shots, and the best prices, please visit **www.GamePro.com** Games **in red** are Editors' Choice, and have received a score of **4.50 or higher**.

NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM(S)	PUBLISHER	FUN FACTOR	ESRB	ISSUE REVIEWED
Army of Two	Xbox 360	EA Games	4.00	M	5/08
Battle of the Bands	Wii	THQ	4.00	T	6/08
Bully: Scholarship Edition	Xbox 360	Rockstar Games	3.50	T	5/08
The Club	**Xbox 360**	**Sega**	**4.50**	**M**	**4/08**
Command & Conquer 3: Kane's Wrath	**PC**	**EA Games**	**4.50**	**T**	**6/08 ▶**
Conflict: Denied Ops	Xbox 360	Eidos	2.25	M	5/08
Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII	**PSP**	**Square Enix**	**4.75**	**T**	**4/08**
Culdcept Saga	Xbox 360	Namco Ban.	3.75	T	5/08
Dark Sector	Xbox 360	D3 Publisher	3.50	M	6/08 ▶
Deca Sports	Wii	Hudson Soft	3.50	E	6/08
Downstream Panic	PSP	Atari	3.75	E10+	4/08
FIFA Street 3	Xbox 360	EA Sports Big	3.50	E	4/08
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates	DS	Square Enix	3.75	E10+	5/08
Frontlines: Fuel of War	Xbox 360	THQ	4.00	T	5/08
God of War: Chains of Olympus	**PSP**	**Sony**	**4.75**	**M**	**5/08**
Grand Theft Auto IV	**Xbox 360**	**Rockstar**	**5.00**	**M**	**6/08 ▶**
Iron Man	Xbox 360	Sega	2.25	T	6/08
Lost Odyssey	Xbox 360	Microsoft	3.25	T	5/08
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	DS	Sega	3.25	E	4/08
Mario Kart Wii	**Wii**	**Nintendo**	**4.75**	**E**	**6/08**
Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword	DS	Tecmo	4.00	T	4/08
Okami	**Wii**	**Capcom**	**4.50**	**T**	**5/08**
Opoona	Wii	Koei	3.00	E10+	5/08
Patapon	**PSP**	**Sony**	**4.50**	**E**	**4/08**
Super Smash Bros. Brawl	**Wii**	**Nintendo**	**5.00**	**T**	**5/08 ▶**
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2	Xbox 360	Ubisoft	4.00	M	6/08
Twisted Metal Head On: Extra Twisted Edition	PS2	Sony	4.00	T	4.00
The World Ends With You	**DS**	**Square Enix**	**4.50**	**T**	**5/08**

GAMEPRO
EDITORS' CHOICE

FOR LEASE
TAXI
GAMEPRO
EDITORS' CHOICE



(NOT SO) BIG LIST

Game Name	Fun Factor
Advance Wars: Days of Ruin (DS)	**4.50**
Apollo Justice: Ace Attorney (DS)	3.75
Burnout Paradise (PS3)	**5.00**
Contra 4 (DS)	**4.50**
Crysis (PC)	**4.75**
Devil May Cry 4 (PS3/Xbox 360)	**4.50**
Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors (Wii)	4.00
Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law (PSP)	3.75
Manhunt 2 (Wii)	3.25
No More Heroes (Wii)	**4.50**

Game Name	Fun Factor
The Orange Box (PS3/Xbox 360)	**5.00**
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice (PSP)	3.50
SceneIt! (Xbox 360)	4.00
Smarty Pants (Wii)	3.75
Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity (Wii)	3.00
Super Mario Galaxy (Wii)	**5.00**
Time Crisis 4 (PS3)	4.00
Trauma Center: New Blood (Wii)	4.25
Turok (Xbox 360)	3.75
Unreal Tournament III (PS3)	4.25
Zack & Wiki: Search for Barbaros' Treasure (Wii)	4.25

FEEDBACK YOU WRITE. WE RESPOND.

LETTER OF THE MONTH CONTEST

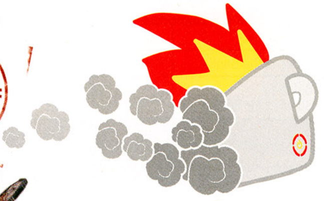
The Letter of the Month winner will receive a sample of Stridex Dual Solutions.

STRIDEX DUAL SOLUTIONS

One Jar, two Solutions...the right answer to acne every time. Use the pads for daily cleansing and the gel to deep-treat trouble spots.

Dual Solutions
STRIDEX
Dual Solutions
STRIDEX

Letter of the Month
GP
08 July
#238

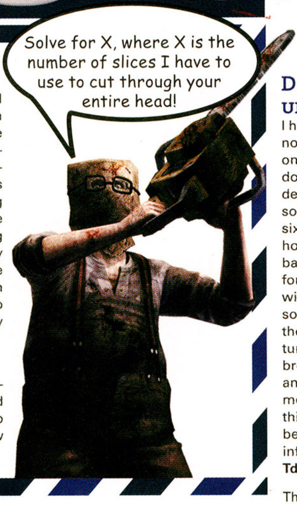


THE COOLEST MATH TEACHER IN THE WORLD

I have been a gamer since I could hold a controller, and that love has never faded. I use games in the classroom as a high school math teacher. I have used the Triforce from The Legend of Zelda to teach midsegments of triangles, and rotations of 3D shapes using puzzles from Resident Evil 4. There are many opportunities to use games in education, but it's very difficult to use games during school hours because many parents hear names like "Resident Evil" and instantly worry for the well-being of their child. As much as I would like to include my older students in Call of Duty 4 multiplayer, I only use the parts of games that benefit the lesson and contain no questionable material. In the end, I am always left to defend the entertainment I love most. Hopefully society will one day accept it. Until then, I'll see you online!

Kevin Daniels—Via Internet

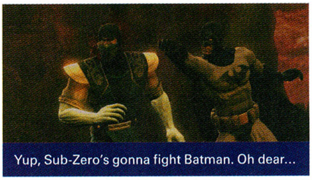
We could have used your creative teaching to pass statistics, Kevin! Thanks for your letter, your perspective, and your passion. Keep in mind, as video games continue to grow, they'll gain widespread respect before you know it. Game on, indeed.


Solve for X, where X is the number of slices I have to use to cut through your entire head!

MORTAL KOMBAT 8?

I'm a delusional Mortal Kombat fanboy. With the release of new consoles, Mortal Kombat 8 was announced. It's been over a year and a half now, and with no updates since the original announcement, this little fanboy is starting to get worried. Help!

Fraysol—Via Internet



Yup, Sub-Zero's gonna fight Batman. Oh dear...

The legends are true: Mortal Kombat 8 is seeing some huge changes. The game has been renamed Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe and promises to be a re-imagining of the classic brawler, says Midway. As you might have guessed, DC Comics is lending a few well-known faces, including Superman and Batman, as playable fighters. But the big news is that MK vs. DC is not expected to feature the gory Fatalities that the series is known for, and spurting blood will be kept to a minimum. This means you probably won't be decapitating Superman or ripping off Batman's arms, unfortunately. We're intrigued (and slightly concerned) by the new direction—read our full report on page 36.

TASTES LIKE PLASTIC!

Here's a strange question that will make you say "Huh?!" or "mmm..." Have you ever wondered what a video game disc tastes like? I mean, looking at it you might think, "That would taste dull," but how do you really know? Someone should conduct a taste test or something for each console disc to decide which has the less repellent taste. I'm rooting for GameCube discs.

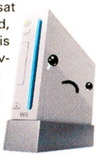
Mike Maxim—West Wareham, MA

Wow, Mike. You take our favorite obsession to a whole 'nother level. We'll stick with edibles, thank you very much.

WHY ALL THE Wii HATE?

Why do gamers bash Wii? Sure, it doesn't have the best online system or graphics, and a lot of games are not the most mature games out there. But when was the last time you sat down, looked at a game and said, "Wow look at those graphics! This game is so much fun!" Take Oblivion, for example. It doesn't have the best graphics, and is missing online play, but a lot of people say it's one of the best RPGs ever made. Same thing with the Metroid Prime series, the Zelda series, Fable, Guitar Hero, and Super Mario Bros. Just because there is no online play or great graphics, doesn't mean it's a bad game.

Carl Burgason—Hilliard, OH



DON'T TOWEL YOUR XBOX 360... UNLESS YOU WANT TO START A FIRE

I have subscribed to your magazine for 10 years now. I love your articles but am very upset at one recent article. How on Earth can you condone wrapping a towel around an electronic device and publish this as a trick to fix a console? I have been an electronics mechanic for six years now, and this is a serious fire hazard. I hope you publish my letter stating so and taking back this advice. The whole reason why it works for a while is because there is a solder problem with the Xbox 360. The console gets so hot in some units that the solder becomes brittle over the heating and cooling of the system. This in turn weakens the connection and it eventually breaks. When you wrap a towel around the unit and let it run it gets so hot that the solder joints melt and reconnect, but there's no guarantee this will fix it. Other than that, your articles have been great. In any case, thanks for all the great info on the games.

Tdragon50—Via Internet

Thanks for the Protip, Tdragon50. Consider yourself published! And gamers, consider yourself warned: "toweling" your Xbox 360 carries its own risks. Safety first, people!

PC GAMING IS NOT DEAD

I just want to say that PC game sales are not decreasing. The numbers that are used to compare the revenue from PCs and consoles are inaccurate. Bean counters only tally store sales of games on PC, excluding digital downloads and MMO subscriptions, two areas which make up a large portion of PC gaming. Totaling console sales is a much more straightforward and accurate process. Piracy definitely eats into PC sales, but PC gaming is not "dead." Furthermore, I understand there will soon be a service exclusive to PCs that lets you play full games for free so long as you watch a short ad during the load screens, which is a lot better than paying $60 at retail. Take that, consoles!

Edan Grossman—Fairfax Station, VA

PC gaming isn't dead, but it's not nearly as healthy as the game consoles, either. Take Madden NFL 09, for example. In March, Electronic Arts said it would not release the popular game on PC this year for the first time in 10 years due to "very serious business challenges." Ouch! We still love PC games (give us Diablo III *now*), but the games just haven't been there lately. We'll continue to keep a close eye on the PC market, but for now, the new consoles seem to be drawing way more interest. We'll keep you posted!

PARENTS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND
DJ Jazzy Jeff
The Fresh Prince
Oooo...

Parents just don't understand

My parents are very controlling about my gaming. Since the day I was born, they have restricted me from ever owning a console, and they don't let me subscribe to *GamePro*, forcing me to spend $6 dollars every month per issue (which they don't even know about). I have a computer which I received as a Bar Mitzvah gift, and I turned it into my gaming system the day I got it, but it's sorely lacking when it comes to playing demanding games. I really need an upgrade and just thought people would get a good laugh hearing my story. Now I'm off to go play Resident Evil 4 at two frames per second.

Eli Mogul—Winnetka, IL

GamePro senior editor Sid Shuman grew up in a similarly game-starved environment. "My parents forbid me owning any games...my only outlet was the neighborhood arcade!" The good news is that his parents finally allowed him to buy a Genesis on his 12th birthday, thus paving the way for his illustrious career as an editor for *GamePro*. As for your dilemma, we'd like to offer our condolences. We certainly wouldn't encourage you to break any parental rules. Then again, there are a million places you could hide a PSP or DS...you know, theoretically. We won't tell if you won't...

Blaster Mastered

Will Nintendo ever recreate a new Blaster Master or River City Ransom game? Those games were classic. Damn I am old.

Neklow—Via Internet

You think you're old? My first console was a Colecovision. As for your question, Nintendo doesn't own the rights to either Blaster Master or River City Ransom, two very cool games that many NES owners played to death in the 1980s. The good news is that River City Ransom was recently announced and released for Virtual Console, and it's also available on the GBA as River City Ransom EX.

REAL-LIFE SIMULATION

Life-simulation games for Xbox 360?

I am a nine year-old gamer who owns an Xbox 360. But there is one problem: my favorite genre is life-simulation (something like The Sims), and I cannot find a game like that on the Xbox 360. I would really appreciate it if you could recommend one. I'm desperate!

Caleb Smith—Chicago, IL

While the PC is probably your best bet when it comes to Sims-like games, you should check out Viva Piñata for the Xbox 360. It's a bright, colorful, and a hugely underrated game well worth the time of any sim lover. Viva Piñata II is due out this fall—read our report on page 40.

DS over Wii?

Which do you liked more: the Nintendo DS or the Wii? The DS has some pretty good games like Phantom Hourglass and Metroid Prime Hunters, and it's portable. But the Wii has Metroid Prime 3, Mario Galaxy, Zelda: Twilight Princess, and many more. I just got a Wii last Christmas and really like it, but having played Zelda Phantom Hourglass recently, sometimes I think I should have gotten a DS instead. What do you think, *GamePro*?

Adam Shine—Via Internet

We give both systems a glowing endorsement, especially if you dig imaginative Nintendo games. In any case, it really depends on what you value more: portability or the added depth of console games. Also, you can always trade in your Wii for a DS assuming you're strapped for cash, and have money left over to buy more games.

A boring 2008 for Nintendo?

Super Mario Galaxy, Super Smash Bros. Brawl, and Mario Kart Wii are awesome games and more than enough to sate the appetite of Wii owners for the first half of the year. But what now? Sony has Metal Gear Solid 4, and Microsoft has other big names coming like Gears of War 2. So what I'm really asking is, what does Nintendo plan to do to win the second half of the console war? New original games? Better online play? A new Kirby or Starfox, Perhaps?

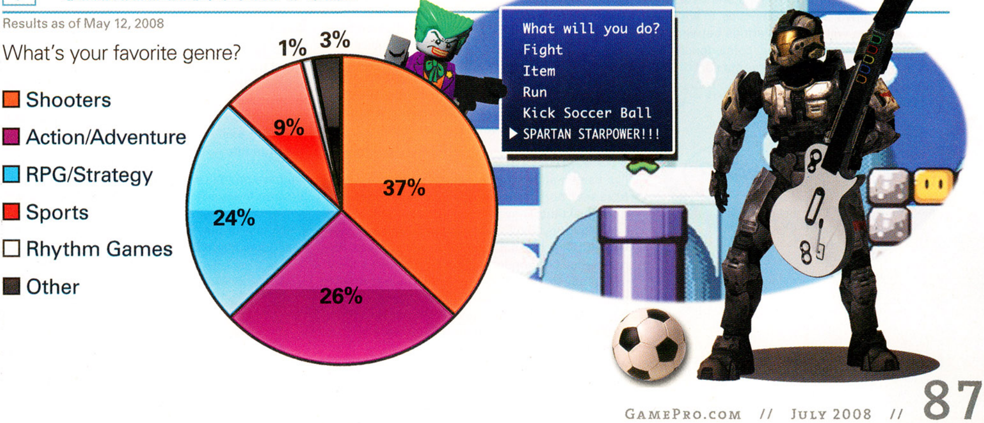
hoyboy1—Via Internet

Three of the biggest titles in 2008 (Metal Gear Solid 4, Grand Theft Auto IV, and Gears of War 2)

✓ GamePro.com Poll

Results as of May 12, 2008

What's your favorite genre?



ASK THE GAMEGIRL

I'm constantly smashing controllers and becoming filled with rage from losing and/or dying in the video games that I own. I know I have a bad temper, but are there any games you could recommend to me that won't frustrate me to the point of becoming violent? —Marko B.

Nikole's Response:

First off, you are not alone. We have all been there. I too have broken many a controller, even thrown the remote control, shattering it into many pieces forcing me to get up and change the channel for weeks. But if your sick of getting violent with your games try playing non-violent games. Now I'm hardly suggesting you put away all your first-person shooters, but I am suggesting you broaden your horizons. Balance your time with some Mario Kart, The Sims, or even some Audio Surf. For me, the ultimate way to relax and unwind after a hard day of sword swinging and target shooting is some Viva Piñata. Generally speaking, games where you can't die, plus have lots of easy achievements tend to do wonders for your temper. If all else fails and these game just aren't fun for you then play the game through on easy first. There is nothing wrong with doing a walkthrough either; getting a little help to get you past the tough parts that are driving you crazy is a great way to avoid getting to the point of throwing a controller. Hope that helps.

Send your questions to the Game Girls at **GameGirl.com**

won't be coming to Wii, so it's easy to see how that might seem like a bad sign for Nintendo. So what's Nintendo going to do? They'll likely bide their time until they're ready to announce something new that will excite gamers. As for what Nintendo can do to "win" the console war, the answer is plain and simple: Nintendo just needs to keep on being Nintendo and they'll be fine. If they do improve their online service and announce some hot new titles, it can only help their cause. But their current game plan is working quite nicely, nonetheless—the Wii is one of the hottest game consoles in years.

Halo ripping off Aliens?

Has anybody ever noticed the striking similarities between *Aliens* and the first Halo game? Take note of the Halo characters, who are in many cases exactly like the marines from *Aliens*. *Aliens* features a hard-nosed black sergeant, reflected in Halo's Sgt. Johnson. There is also a tough Latin woman (Vasquez in *Aliens*) in both. Halo also uses exact quotes from *Aliens*, such as, "Let's go Marines, the corps ain't paying us by the hour!" I know there are many others. The aliens and Elites also share similar physical characteristics. In any case, I *guarantee* you will find similarities between the two that cannot possibly be coincidence. Not that I'm trying to imply there's some sort of Halo/*Aliens* conspiracy...

Zach Antunes—Via Internet

RIP OFF HEAD

Our guess is that the Bungie guys are huge fans of *Aliens* and wanted to tip their hat to the pioneering sci-fi series. They're not alone: dozens of shooters liberally borrow the dialogue and visual style of *Aliens*. Call of Duty 4 is a key offender, with Marines barking, "Check those corners!" among other lines. It can be distressing to see so many games crib from *Aliens*, but you know what they say: imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Maybe the upcoming Aliens: Colonial Marines shooter for the PS3 and Xbox 360 will introduce some memorable new dialogue for other games to lift.

My Wii juice is running low

How can I keep a Wii Remote charged? I'd like to avoid burning through packages of regular AA batteries, and the Wii Remote charging station is getting mixed reviews. Got any recommendations?

Viperxmns—Via Internet

Invest in some quality rechargeable batteries. Sanyo's Eneloops work great. Just be diligent about recharging them: when they run low, plug them in before you go sleep and they should be ready to go in the morning. As for the Wii Charge Station, we actually have one here in the office and it works just fine. The only problem is that when the juice runs out, the other editors here wouldn't put it back in the cradle; they'd just pull the battery pack out and replace it with standard batteries (the jerks). We didn't do a straight-up review of the Charge Station, but it's an interesting option worth considering.

PS3 worries

I've been a subscriber for seven years now, and I have seen both technology and consoles come and go. In that time, I have also avoided any and all contact with Sony PlayStation systems. However, now that HD DVD has succumbed to a victorious Blu-ray format, I'm wondering whether or not it's worth my money to buy a PS3 over a stand-alone Blu-ray player for high-definition movies. Which should I buy? I have friends who have PS3s and love them, but I'm a little hesitant to buy a $500 system.

Andrew Tiller—Nashville, TN

At the moment, the PlayStation 3 is the most economical Blu-ray player on the market. What's more, you get a "free" video-game system included, too, something normal Blu-ray players obviously lack. And remember, you can opt for the cheaper $399 PS3 instead of the $499 version and still play Blu-ray movies. Hope that helps!

Response to "A Slightly Different Path" from issue 235

I would like to applaud the writers and editors of *GamePro* for giving gamers what we need—a gamer magazine! Your report on God of War III and Resident Evil 5 in the April 2008 issue is the reason I picked up the magazine, and I wasn't disappointed. Yours is an opinion I truly trust when choosing what game to buy, because I believe you look at each video game through a gamer's point of view as opposed to a "holier-than-thou" slant. It's nice to know you guys are working hard to make fellow gamers happy, bringing us the latest and greatest from a true gamers perspective!

A.E. Moryn—Via Internet

We're thrilled that you approve of our direction, A.E., and we commit to further enhancing our objective coverage while staying relentlessly focused on only the biggest and freshest games. We hope you enjoy the ride as much as we do. Stay tuned—big things are coming soon!

Birdo and Yoshi are gay (literally)

I read the Super Mario Bros. 2 instruction manual recently, and it says that Birdo is a boy who thinks he is a girl. Yoshi, in turn, is said to be in love with Birdo. So does that mean Yoshi and Birdo are gay?

Kaeshun Riley—Via Internet

We have no idea which team either Birdo or Yoshi plays for. In any case, we respect their privacy and will wait until they are ready to make an announcement, which may or may not come with the release of the next Super Mario Bros.

FDBK Get the link to **Feedback** sent to your e-mail. Text **FDBK** to **59479**

Only standard text messaging rates apply

Reader Reviews

BURNOUT PARADISE (PS3)

Not a racer's paradise, but my kind of paradise.

by Fastthumbs227

I am not a big racing fan. I'm not about to get Grand Turismo 5 Prologue, but when I first played Burnout Paradise, I loved it. It's not just racing; it's crashing, collecting, and having some fun. It has missions like Race, or a mission where you have to go somewhere, and cars are trying to kill you. Although these missions get repetitive, there are other things to do. There are some hidden unlockables like jumps, and smashing billboards, or getting hidden cars by crashing into them. It's fun, but if you love racing, that's not what this is about. This is the pure fun of being the fastest, coolest, best car around. The multiplayer is solid, and fun challenges are always around. A new pack is coming soon, free, and it allows more cars, and better multiplayer. Even without the pack, this is fun. I give it a five for awesomely exhilarating fun.

Fun Factor: 5.00

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV (Xbox 360)

Grand Theft Auto IV lives up to the hype.

by Unstoppable19

What can one say about Grand Theft Auto that hasn't already been said. This game is phenomenal. The story, the characters, the missions, the exploration, there is basically nothing in this game that you can't do. The graphics are a little average but are quickly forgiven when you think of all the pressure that the game is putting on the Xbox 360 or PS3's engine just to keep a whole living, breathing, detailed city with no load times going. Grand Theft Auto is made for the gamer and I curse anyone who thinks otherwise. After they fit all that single player on one disc, they still manage to cram in an over-the-top multiplayer that's just as fun as Warhawk. Contrary to negative opinion but GTAIV stands up to be the best game to come out on any system so far.

Fun Factor: 5.00

WRITE TO US:

Got a question or comment? Write to us with your name and town via e-mail: letters@gamepro.com or *GamePro*, Head2Head, 501 2nd St., Ste. 114, San Francisco, CA 94107 (Be sure to tell us your city and state, too.) The best letters will be rewarded with publishing bragging rights in future issues of *GamePro*.

CONNECT ONLINE

Take your obsession online, follow your favorite games and systems, and sound off on breaking stories.

GamePro.com
Breaking, extensive, and media-rich coverage of the biggest and freshest games. Check out the forums, too—they're the Internet's best-kept secret!

Games.net
The aggregate gaming hub for reviews, original features, and up-to-the-second blog posts.

SlobsOfGaming.com
Full of unhealthily obsessive features, gaming culture, and over-enthusiastic gaming detritus.

GameGirl.com
Girls play video games, too. We have proof! One of the hottest sites in the GamePro.com network.

OMGHalo.com
24/7 coverage of all things Halo. All hail Master Chief!

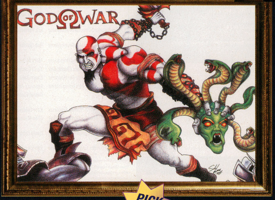
ART ATTACK!

This month's winner receives

The Bourne Conspiracy (Xbox 360)

Become the perfect weapon. Become Bourne. In Stores now.

BOURNE
CONSPIRACY



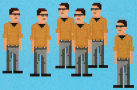
PICK of the Month!

Sandra Loke
of Hollywood, Florida

Send us your art!

GamePro magazine • Art Attack
501 Second Street, Suite 114
San Francisco, CA 94107-1431
artattack@gamepro.com

All art becomes the property of *GamePro* magazine. Sorry, we cannot return artwork. We will accept color photocopies or digital scans.



University of Advancing Technology
UAT
Learn. Experience. Innovate.

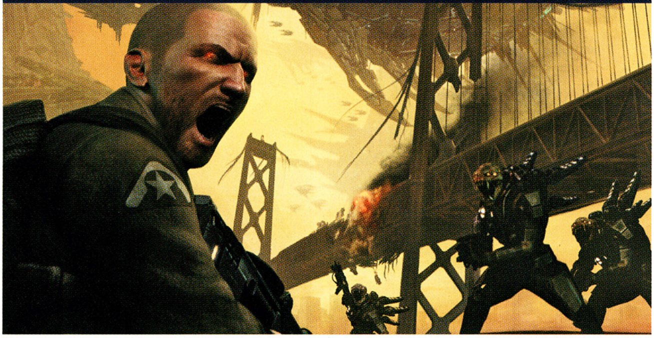
Please geek responsibly.
You may speak the language,
but are you geeked?
Here's a chance to prove it.

LEARN:

DIGITAL ANIMATION
DIGITAL ART AND DESIGN
DIGITAL VIDEO
GAME DESIGN
ARTIFICIAL LIFE PROGRAMMING
COMPUTER FORENSICS
GAME PROGRAMMING
NETWORK ENGINEERING
NETWORK SECURITY
SOFTWARE ENGINEERING
WEB ARCHITECTURE
ROBOTICS

www.uat.edu > 877.UAT.GEEK
877.828.4335

NEXT MONTH: RESISTANCE 2



INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

This index is provided as an additional service. The publisher does not assume liability for errors, omissions, or additions due to last-minute changes or other contingencies.

Atari 18, 27
ATARI.COM
AT&T 23
ATT.COM/DIGITALWORLD
Capcom 57
LOSTPLANETCOMMUNITY.COM
Colgate 39
COLGATE.COM
Full Sail Real World Education 43
FULLSAIL.COM
GameFly 10, 11
GAMEFLY.COM/GAMEPRO
Hudson 35
DECASPORTS.COM
Intel 91
ABS.COM
Konami 12, 13
KONAMI.COM
Majesco Entertainment 29
WWW.MAJESCOGAMES.COM
Milk .... Cover 4
BODYBYMILK.COM
Namco 15
NARUTOHEROES2.NAMCOBANDAIGAMES.COM
Sega 2, 3
SEGA.COM
Sony .... Cover 2, 1
US.PLAYSTATION.COM
Square Enix 31
NA.SQUARE-ENIX.COM/FF4
Stridex 25
STRIDEX.COM
University of Advanced Technology 89
UAT.EDU
U.S. Army .... Cover 3
GOARMY.COM/ROTC/STARTSTRONG
U.S. Navy 17
NAVY.COM/SEALS
Wrigley 9
WRIGLEY.COM

501 Second Street, Suite 114
San Francisco, CA 94107-1431
Tel: 415/243-4112 Fax: 415/974-7304

SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS
P.O. Box 37579
Boone, IA 50037-0579
800/678-9097
Or go to www.gamepro.com/customer_service

ADVERTISING ADVERTISING SALES INQUIRIES ONLY, PLEASE.

West Coast Office: TEL: 415/243-4112 • FAX: 415/974-7304

Jennifer Crist	REGIONAL SALES MANAGER, EAST COAST	jcrist@idg-entertainment.com
Melody Idilliler	SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, NORTHWEST	midilliler@idg-entertainment.com
Nathan Lindberg	SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, SOUTHWEST	nlindberg@idg-entertainment.com
Aaron Catrett	ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, EAST COAST	acatrett@idg-entertainment.com
Andy Burt	SALES ASSOCIATE	aburt@idg-entertainment.com

BACK-ISSUE COPIES
http://www.gamepro.com/backissues

INTERNATIONAL DATA GROUP
Patrick J. McGovern, Chairman of the Board
Bob Carrigan, CEO, IDG Communications, Inc.

Volume 20, #7; July Issue; **GAMEPRO®** (ISSN 1042-8658) is published monthly for $24.95 per year by IDG Entertainment, 501 Second Street, Suite 114, San Francisco, CA 94107-1431; An IDG Company: The World's Leader In Information Services On Information Technology. Periodical postage paid at San Francisco, CA, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to GAMEPRO, P.O. Box 37578, Boone, IA 50037-0578. **Change of Address:** Please send old label and new address to GAMEPRO, P.O. Box 37578, Boone, IA 50037-0578. **Foreign and Canadian** orders must be prepaid in U.S. dollars on a U.S. bank and must include $12 for Canadian delivery or $25 for foreign air delivery. Canadian GST# 131 304 347. Agreement number 40612608 assigned by Canada Post. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Bleuchip Intl., P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2.

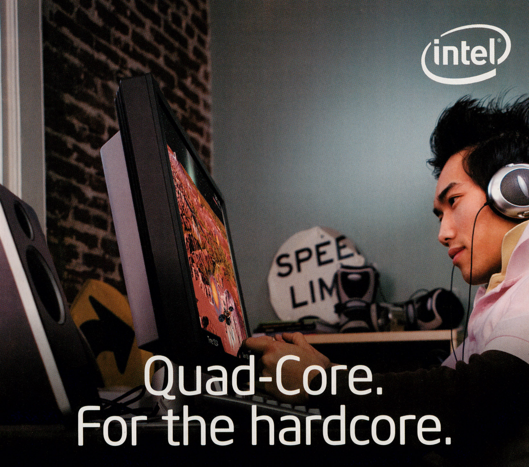
GAMEPRO
www.gamepro.com

Publisher	Bob Huseby
Executive Creative Director	George Jones
Managing Editor	Mike Weigand
Senior Editors	Sidney Shuman Chris Morell
Reviews Editor	Tae K. Kim
Previews Editor	Travis Moses
GamerHelp Editor	Patrick Shaw
Games.Net Editor	Dave Rudden
Editorial Assistant	Todd Melick
Video Producer	Chris Parisi
Associate Video Producer	Michelle Jones
Copy Editor	Chenda Ngak
Editorial Interns	Will Herring McKinley Noble Ryan Perez Ivy Yup
Art Director	George Hu
Designer	Andrew Yang
Associate Web Producer	Brandon Wells
Design Assistant	Sean Bledsoe
Design Intern	William Chu
Director, Production	Steve Spingola
Prepress Manager	Joe Crocenzi
Director, Online Product Development	Craig Eastman
Lead Web Developer	Jason Klingstedt
Senior Web Developer	Justin Lewis
Web Developers	Sui Mak Arthur Orneck
Web Development Intern	Jimmy Ying

IDG ENTERTAINMENT

President and CEO	Daniel Orum
Sales and Administrative Assistant	Roxanne Warrick
Senior Vice Presidents	Bob Huseby George Jones
Vice President/Director of Marketing	Eric Patterson
Director, Business Development	Rob Giuffre
Manager, Advertising Operations	Mary Atchison
Advertising Operations Coordinator	Karla Cuadra
Specialist, Audience Development	Karim Baki
Marketing Interns	Lennisse Ambriz Daniel Easterday
Vice President, Human Resources	Kate Coldwell
Human Resources Representative	Ellen Malinowski
Director, Consumer Marketing	David Cobb
Founder, GamePro *magazine*	Patrick J. Ferrell

Entire contents copyright 2008 by IDG Entertainment. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without prior written permission by the publisher is prohibited. All submissions, including, but not limited to, artwork, text, photographs, and videotapes, become the property of the publisher. Submissions cannot be returned; senders should retain a copy. The GAMEPRO®, DVDPRO®, and NETPRO® names and logos are Registered Trademarks of International Data Group, Inc. Nintendo, Nintendo 64, Game Boy, Game Boy Color, Game Boy Advance, GameCube, Nintendo DS, Nintendo Wii, and the 3D "N" logo are Registered Trademarks or Trademarks of Nintendo of America, Inc. PlayStation, PlayStation 2, PlayStation 3, PS one, PSP, and the PlayStation logo are Registered Trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, the Microsoft Game Studios logo, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logos, the Xbox 360 logos, and the Xbox Live logo are Registered Trademarks or Trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries, and are used under license from Microsoft. Nokia and N-Gage are Trademarks or Registered Trademarks of Nokia Corporation. Sega, Dreamcast, and the Dreamcast logo are either Registered Trademarks or Trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. All products and the characters contained therein are owned by the respective trademark and copyright owners. GamePro does not claim any copyright in the screen shots herein. Copyright in all screen shots contained within this publication are owned by their respective companies. All materials listed in this guide are subject to change, and the publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. Printed in the U.S.A. For subscription problems only, please write: P.O. Box 37578, Boone, IA 50037-0578, or call: 800/678-9097.


intel
Quad-Core.
For the hardcore.

Play like a pro with a new PC featuring the Intel® Core™2 Extreme Quad-Core processor.

ABS builds some of the most highly regarded computing solutions in the industry.

Ultimate X Magnum Extreme

Starts at $5899

- Intel® Core™2 Extreme Quad-Core Processor QX6850
- ASUS P5K3 DELUXE Motherboard
- ABS BZ1100W Power Supply

abs

Visit: **www.abs.com** or call:800.926.8088

intel Core 2 Extreme inside™

Extreme Performance

Intel is not responsible for and has not verified any statements or computer system product specific claims contained herein.

© 2007 Intel Corporation. All rights reserved. Intel, the Intel logo, Intel Core, and Core Inside are trademarks of Intel Corporation in the U.S. and other countries.
*Other names and brands may be claimed as the property of others. Price specifications and terms are subject to change without notice. ABS® is not responsible for errors in typography and/or photography.

THE CHIMERA TAKE TO THE SKIES.

RESISTANCE 2

PS3

The alien Chimera have packed up and moved out west. Two years after the initial invasion on European soil, Resistance 2 brings the fight to a war-torn United States deep in depression. From the Golden Gate bridge in San Francisco to the Chrysler building in New York City, Nathan Hale and fellow Chimeran resistors called "Sentinels" must once again rise up against the invading horde in a full-scale aerial assault that promises to be even bigger than the first. With an eight-player cooperative mode and 60-player multiplayer battles, Resistance 2 is already shaping up to be one of the biggest games of 2008.

START COMMANDING ATTENTION.
START OUT ON TOP.
START RAISING THE BAR.
ARMY ROTC
START LEARNING MORE.
START HIGHER.
START ONE STEP AHEAD.
START GETTING AHEAD OF THE GAME.
START MOVING UP.
START LEADING FROM DAY ONE.
START SHOWING THE WAY.
START TAKING CHARGE.

START STRONG.℠

There's strong. Then there's Army Strong. If you want to be a leader in life, Army ROTC is the strongest way to start. Many top leaders in both government and business started in Army ROTC. It provides hands-on leadership development. Plus you can earn a full-tuition, merit-based scholarship. After graduation, you'll earn the rank of Second Lieutenant, an Officer, responsible for leading and training Soldiers. With a start like that, there's no limit to what you can achieve.

Find out more at goarmy.com/rotc/startstrong.

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE
ARMY ROTC

U.S. ARMY
ARMY STRONG.

© 2007. Paid for by Army ROTC. All rights reserved.

THE DARK KNIGHT™
IN THEATERS JULY 18
got milk?®

Others reload. Batman refuels.
Research suggests that milk's unique mix of nutrients can help athletes recover after exercise. And its protein can help build muscle. So train hard and drink lowfat or fat free milk, because the Batmobile™ isn't the only thing that needs to refuel.

body by milk®

www.bodybymilk.com

Motion Picture Artwork and Photography ©2008 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. BATMAN and all related characters and elements are trademarks of and © DC Comics.
PG-13 http://thedarkknight.warnerbros.com ©2008 AMERICA'S MILK PROCESSORS